Is Butkus Really The Best? I ARTERRACI PRO FOOTBALL'S LEADING MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Personalities

Chris Hanhurger

Howard Twilley

Duane Thomas

he Drug Probl er-Played

OLD GRAND-DAD IS READY FOR RETIREMENT

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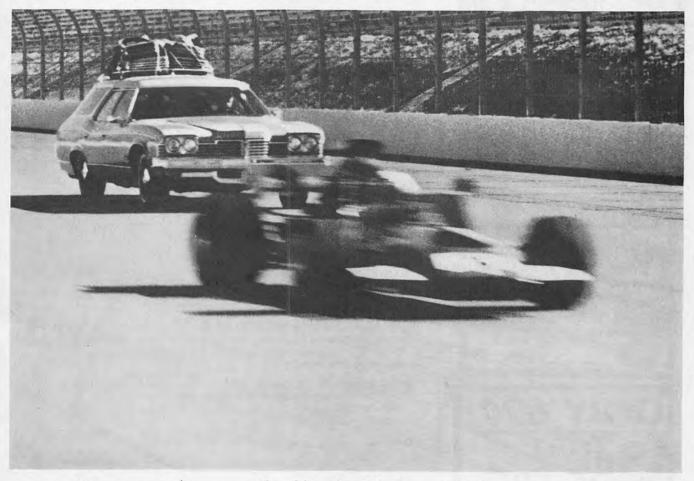
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Bill Wallace

Focus

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Dear Sir:

I subscribe to your magazine and after having read many other letters written to you, I finally decided to write myself. I am writing mainly because I enjoy reading your magazine but have observed that very few people write to say that they like, or agree with, what you say.

First of all, I think that people get too hysterical about your ratings of the quarterbacks. I happen to agree with them 100%. (Am I your first writer to feel that way?). It is only natural that each football fan likes a certain team or a certain quarterback better than the rest. But some feel so strongly that if you don't agree they get mad at you. Actually, your ratings are not based on numbers or statistics. Since they do include a certain amount of opinion, they should be taken that way and not as something to be fought over. Lots of people base their opinions of quarterbacks on rumors and their (the quarterback's) social life. For example, I feel that Joe Namath is very obviously a fantastic quarterback (possibly the best the NFL has seen or ever will see), but I know that people will get angry with me just for saying that. Unfortunately, it doesn't help my side any that I happen to be a girl (although that doesn't mean that I know any less about footballjudging from some letters written to you. I'd say I know a great deal more about the sport than many).

In your April/May issue a man named Tom Fiore of Lodi said that he couldn't see how you could say Joe Namath is the greatest. If everyone were as certain as he seems to be that they were right about everything I can imagine that the letters you've received would be unprintable. I could say that I can't see how anyone can disagree with that statement but I am not quite that conceited. I realize that that is only my opinion, just as the opposite is Tom's opinion, and I don't feel that anyone has the right to force his opinion on others no matter how strongly he feels about it. I don't mean to pick on this one letter-writer in particular, however he happens to be a perfect example of what I am talking about.

Anyway, I do enjoy and agree with the great majority of the things your staff writes and I look forward to receiving your magazines in the future and possibly even writing to you again. Thanks for giving me the chance to voice my opinion.

Dara Callender Wayne, New Jersey EDITOR'S NOTE: If we have made one reader happy with our writing then we have succeeded. But if we have not made

one reader unhappy, then we have failed.

PRO QUARTERBACK invites and welcomes comments from its readers. Feel free to speak your mind; we'll print letters both complimentary and critical (although we may disagree with you!). Mail your comments to: Kick-off Editor, S.C.H. Publications, 39 West 55th St., New York, N.Y. 10019.

Wouldn't it be boring if we all agreed with each other?!

Dear Sir:

So what the bleep is wrong with having a winner coaching the Washington Redskins? I am certain the New York Giant fans would love the thought of having such a scoundrel as George Allen as their coach.

I have been a Redskin season ticket holder through the regimes of Joe Kuharich, Mike Nixon, Bill McPeak, Otto Graham, the late Coach Lombardi, Bill Austin, and George Allen. Other than Coach Lombardi and George, if my memory is correct, we never had a winning season under those other gentlemen although each received a sympathetic press. Also, after suffering through all the wonderful football that the aforementioned losers provided, I couldn't care less what George might do towards his goal of winning. In short, show me a good loser and I'll show you a loser!

I firmly believe in an objective press. However, I don't believe that sportswriters on a slow news day should go out of their way to stir up dissension on a team or within a community as George Solomon is so prone to do. Sports scribes should get down on their knees at night and thank their lucky stars that provide them with the free passes and expense accounts for covering major sports events. And while on the subject, of integrity and expense accounts, how many sports writers would submit an affidavit to a federal grand jury declaring that the swindle sheets submitted to the boss are, "to the best of my knowledge true and correct under penalty of law?" Robert H. Moss

Silver Spring, Md. EDITOR'S NOTE: Boy, some of you folks down Washington way are pretty paranoid these days over the accounts of your Redskin coach. Mr. Moss, we couldn't help but notice how similar a lot of your complaints are about the press compared to those of a problem-plagued administration we've heard so much about. You might be interested to know that the New York Times sports writers no longer accept free tickets from any teams in an attempt to be truly objective in their press coverage. For not only can writers be cited at fault for accepting free tickets. but so also can teams be faulted for what looks like a corruptive gesture in extending the free tickets in the first place. Your alleged "swindle sheets" are not the exclusive domain of sports writers, let's be honest. How many people of any occupa-

Continued on Page 12

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■ The philosophy Satchel Paige states in his line, "Don't look back; something may be gaining on you," is as appropriate to pro football as it is to any other aspect of life. Paige said he never looked back and it's imperative to a football championship team that it never look back. A championship team better not look back at last year and find some comforting feeling that it has something in the bag for the coming year.

The Miami Dolphins more than most teams should realize this fact of life as they begin the 1973 season, for their achievement in 1972 was so unique that they can't expect it to carry over to this year and happen again. Not only did the Dolphins win the Super Bowl, but they also won all 17 games they played. The odds against that kind of thing happening in the first place had to be very high and to really put together all the other things a champion has to deal with, Old Satch's expression would seem to be even more meaningful for them.

One of the real problems with a defending champion, I think, is that it has to be 20 to 30 per cent better in trying to repeat than when it was trying to get there in the first place. The difference in having to be better isn't only in terms of the competition level just being the way it is for every team, but it's also the fact that the champion evokes the best kind of play from all the teams on the schedule.

There will be some teams the Dolphins play that will have 40 tigers, whereas the week before they played somebody and you wondered whether they had any desire at all to win. I think it's simply because there's that feeling, "If we beat the champion, it's going to make our season." The champion just becomes an obvious target that everybody uses as a measure of what kind of football team they have.

That was the greatest thing the Green Bay Packers had to live with during their winning years. It's interesting to note Don Shula's reflections about the 1972 season; invariably he winds up talking about what the Packers achieved. And in the '60s, the Packers emerged as a team about whom the other teams constantly felt

Willie



"we're going to see how good we are when we play the Packers.

I think the Dolphins have that kind of soundness about them. They can beat you defensively, they can beat you offensively. They can control the ball, they can go through the air. But they still have a tough road to travel this season simply because they were such an outstanding team in 1972.

There's another problem that enters into it. Not only do you find the competitive situation tougher, but I think you also find that your own team reaches the point where individually, some players want to become a bigger part of the situation and you get complaints from certain guys that they want to play and from others who take the attitude that "if I'm not going to play, I'm going to be the highest paid guy sitting on the bench." You run into a whole lot of things that become a problem for a winning team.

Another of these is salaries. When a team wins a championship, the players want to be rewarded for it in their pay the following season (although the Dolphins interestingly didn't have too much of a problem in that area this year because so many of the players were under multi-year contracts.) It's really tough to turn around after a lot of the players have gone through a knockdown, drag-out situation with management about signing and go on the field and feel it's all forgotten and "we're one team."

Ideally you'd like to think that would be so, but I'm not sure when guys sign for less than what they wanted whether they're really happy. This is something I started to see be-

come a problem even at Green Bay as evidenced by the Jimmy Taylor situation. There always seems to be that mounting problem year after year to deal with people when you're a winner. Everybody wants to be a part of it and when a person can't, he takes a selfish attitude toward it.

In one respect, the Washington Redskins could be in the same boat as the Dolphins because they were a winner even though they didn't win the Super Bowl. But whatever problems they might have could be overcome by some of the moves they made in the off-season. I think in some areas they appear to be a better team than they were last year, even though they're still an old team.

When you get players like Dave Robinson and Ken Houston and Alvin Reed, I feel this potentially improves your team tremendously.

Aside from this seeming improvement in personnel, one phychological edge George Allen has on Don Shula is the fact that they had a good year but they didn't do it, they didn't go all the way and win the Super Bowl.

But here again, the Redskins experienced some of the problems a winner starts to face. The most glaring example was their No. 1 player, Larry Brown, who obviously had a different attitude. This probably was a little bit of a shock for Coach Allen because he never really had that kind of player who didn't come into the fold quickly.

All this starts to show that winning is not an easy thing, yet it's the only thing that can be pursued. I'm not saying it's an incompatible thing. Obviously, people who win aren't unhappy people; they're very proud and they feel very good about it. But it can tend to lead them to overestimate their importance or at least develop that attitude, and it's the attitude you have to deal with in a player. Perhaps it's the same attitude you use in winning games that you want to turn around and use in everything you do.

Despite the built-in problems, I'd have to say these two teams have to be given a good chance of repeating.

If the Dolphins don't make it, though, the American Conference champion could be Oakland, Kansas City or Pittsburgh. In the National Conference, it could be more wide open. Green Bay looks like a solid team. I look for a resurgence from Minnesota; the New York Giants made giant strides last year. Dallas has the tradition and the winning knowhow and San Francisco should have a chance to make a run at it.

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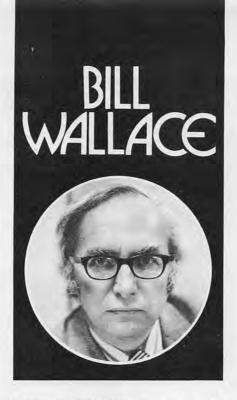
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■ Pro football's new television contracts with the three major networks have been concluded for a whopping raise of \$10 million each year, bringing the annual TV take to \$50 million through 1977. The simple economic reason is that the ratings have been so good, especially in the prime time of Monday nights. To achieve such ratings someone other than men and boys must be watching. By elimination they figure to be women which follows the projections of Commissioner Pete Rozelle who, as long ago as 1968, was telling the networks that pro football certainly had the ability, on the basis of its strong visual qualities, to appeal to women as well as men.

Although no demographics exist on women watchers, it is apparent that lady football fans are on the increase. One reason is the mere pervasiveness of the sport. If you are a housewife sharing a tent with men and boys, then you have to go some length to shut pro football out of your life between August and January.

But nothing remains the same. In advance of an expected strike by the players next year, which will give them grief, the owners of pro football have every right to smile now like contented cats. For the moment, they and their investment are very secure.

Someday, however, they may have to answer to Loraine Wallace. She has very little good to say about pro football and her views are more humanitarian than sour grapes. She thinks the blackout television policy is a denial of human rights. She believes the trading of players from team to

team without their permission is outright slavery. She suspects that the inherent violence in the game is sick, an extension of the militarism in our country which has profited it so little in the past decade.

The hardhats not long ago were telling the critics of our nation, "If you don't like it, leave it." Again because of the pervasiveness, it is hard for a Loraine Wallace to tune out pro football. In addition, it is her husband's vocation 12 months a year and, although along about December 1 I sometimes feel like tuning it out also, it is difficult to ignore completely the other half's life. Ask Martha Mitchell.

Loraine Wallace's interest in sports is minimal, even though she was allegedly captain of the ski team at Miss Hall's School in Pittsfield, Mass., in 1948. Later at Vassar she passed a physical education requirement by taking a course in golf. How she passed is another matter because, she says, she never once was successful in hitting the little white ball.

She is however, no dope. Equipped with a master's degree in psychology, Loraine Wallace knows a good deal about human tastes and drives. She fully admits that sports has a large and rightful place in society; that increasing awareness of the physical body is "a good thing."

So her views towards pro football demand some respect. Our dialogues go something like this:

Me: If the TV blackouts were lifted, people wouldn't go to the stadiums to see the games and 60 per cent of the revenue comes from gate receipts.

She: But you tell me the teams make

money, a lot of money from television. Why don't they go into cable television if they need more money? To deny people the right to see what they want to see is preposterous.

Me: Good response.

Me: As for trading, teams must control players to retain a competitive balance. If they didn't the richest teams in the largest or most desirable cities would have all the good players and win most of the games.

She: I don't know about that. But the trading of players is inhuman. If football is capable technically in other areas, it seems to me they can work out a system whereby the athletes have some choice about whom they work for. In what other field of our society do people have no such choice?

Me: None.

Me: Contact is the nature of the sport. Injuries are part of the risk. That's the way it's always been.

She: You sound like the Pentagon. The Vietnamese War, the bombing in Southeast Asia, the reactions on the campuses, the peace marches-they had to tell you something. The something is that people are sick and tired of violence. But football perpetuates that. People, particularly kids, are turning to other things, tennis, back packing, cross country skiing, boating, yoga, jogging, other things having to do with their own bodies relating to the world in which they live. I'll bet you in another 10 years, people will be turned off by pro football. It's just not where people are going to be at by then.

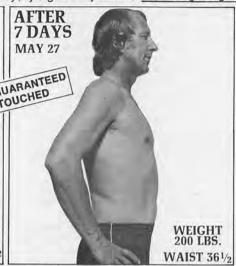
Me: You may be right.

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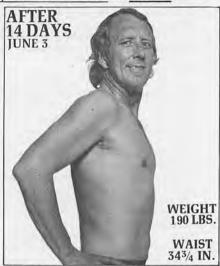
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tion would be willing to do that, let alone swear truth to every item on their income tax forms? You give the impression that George Solomon is a writer for the New York Giants. He is not; he writes for your local team, the Washington Redskins. Sure, it's nice to be a winner, but at any cost? The Watergate scandals are jolting America about that very philosophy.

Dear Sir:

Last year at this time the so-called "experts" of the game gave their infallible predictions. The mighty Minnesota Vikings—having won the division four times previously, and with the return of Fran Tarkenton to add to the renowned Viking defense—were unanimous picks to win the NFC Central Division.

Meanwhile, one team obviously didn't heed such predictions. The Green Bay Packers, the team predicted to come in third or fourth, won the divisional title by beating such teams as the Browns, Cowboys, 49ers, Lions, and even the Vikings. With three games to go in the season, Green Bay was to go against Detroit and Minnesota to determine the divisional titlist. The experts again had the Pack written off, but they mutilated the Lions 33-7 and, at Minnesota's home field, destroyed the Vikings 23-7 to clinch it.

Now it's prediction time again and from what I've read so far, the Packers are predicted to come in second or third, with the Vikings first again. Where is the logic? I'd like to analyze the differences between last year's teams and this year's:

A major issue is the quarterbacks. One excuse for Minnesota's downfall was that Tarkenton was not yet familiarized with the Viking team. Yet, if you look at his statistics, they reveal a fantastic year. A better one is close to impossible. Scott Hunter, admittedly a poor passer, can only be better this year if just for the experience from the games and Bart Starr's priceless coaching.

Injuries hit both teams last year. Page and Eller played with leg injuries while Clint Jones sat out most of the season with a broken arm. But no one realizes that All-Pro Guard Gale Gillingham and tight end Rich McGeorge missed all but the first two games, and MacArthur Lane played late in the season.

Last year the Packers were faced with a wicked schedule, while the Vikings' was much easier. This year the Packers have one of the easiest in the league, while it's the opposite for the Vikings.

It's true Green Bay has lost left linebacker Dave Robinson, but the loss will more than be made up by last year's experience everyone else of the NFC's No. 1 defense gained. The addition of defensive end Aaron Brown is a plus, also. Meanwhile, Minnesota's defense isn't getting any younger. It's doubtful the defensive line will ever be what it was, with Marshall now 35 and Larsen 33 years of age. And the loss of veteran middle linebacker Lonnie Warwick doesn't help much either.

Last year the Vikings had an effective passing game but no running, and vice versa for the Packers. With the draft, help has come to both. Chuck Foreman, a versatile running back went to Minnesota while Barry Smith, a fine receiver, went to Green Bay.

To sum things up, both offenses will still be hurt by last year's weaknesses, but I give the edge to the Packers on offense because of the year's added experience to Hunter. The defensive edge must also go to the Packers. It is younger, faster, more physical, was second against the rush in the NFL (an area Minnesota was weak), and their pass defense gave up only 7 touchdowns, best in the NFL. It is superior to the Viking's overall

The resurgent Green Bay Packers will repeat as Central Division champions, despite the Vikings and the experts' predictions. What do you think?

Steven M. Schumer Fair Lawn, N.J. EDITOR'S NOTE: According to Pro Quarterback's August Pre-Season Annual, the Packers will repeat despite the Vikings. The Packer report concluded with: "An improved season by (Scott) Hunter will return the Packers to the playoffs. A good season by Hunter could put them in the Super Bowl." The analysis on the Vikings went as follows: "The Vikings are ready to push over the .500 mark again, but not contend for the title."



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Mr Don Knotts

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It's generally agreed that one of the best things you can do to keep yourself in good health is to have a regular health checkup.

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Johnny Rodgers

What Makes Johnny Run?

■ Johnny Rodgers is just beginning his career as a running back in professional football but he's done a lot of running already. He ran well enough at Nebraska to win the Heisman Trophy. He ran well enough to be selected the first round draft choice of the San Diego Chargers.

But he kept on running. He ran north, right out of the country and into the arms of the CFL and the Montreal Alouettes.

The NFL was shocked with his sudden departure. So were the San Diego Chargers. Why scarcely two months before Rodgers had been wearing granny glasses under his Charger helmet with the lightning bolt emblazoned across the side. On his jersey was the number 22, which is significant. It was Johnny Rodgers' first day in a San Diego Chargers' uniform and they had given him a number to awaken memories-a number worn in the past by the scampering Dickie Post and, before him, by Keith Lincoln, the most storied of all Charger runners. That's how much they thought of Rodgers.

It was a pleasant sunny day in early March, a day for the rookies to assemble for a brief indoctrination session at the Stardust Country Club practice field in San Diego's Mission Valley.

Someone asked Johnny how he felt. He had just left the wintry snows of Nebraska and he smiled at the question. "I feel better out here," Rodgers said. "Back there in Nebraska it is so cold. The 'hawk' is tough back there. He was looking for me every day."

The hawk? Why, that is the cold bird which carries with him the numbing chills of a midwestern winter.



Johnny Rodgers was happy to be rid of the 'hawk,' if only for a day or two. He romped around the field, under that warming San Diego sun, catching passes, running wind sprints and looking every inch the All-American, Heisman Trophy winning athlete that he is. When he stepped on a scale, it registered 178, his regular playing weight, and he confided that he really wasn't yet in top form, physically. "The flu," he explained. "I've been sick with a touch of the flu for about the last three months. I was sick even when I played in the Orange Bowl. I think I only weighed about 160 pounds that day."

That day, playing against Notre Dame, Rodgers only scored four touchdowns himself and passed for a fifth. If he was hampered by illness, Notre Dame sure didn't notice.





ATLANTA FALCONS

Head coach Norm Van Brocklin, in looking forward to the 1973 season, said, "We need improvement in our passing game. We need better yardage yield after the catch by our receivers, and of course, blocking improvement is always a constant objective. Offensively, holding onto the ball is a must by our backs and receivers. We simply cannot win consistently without the ball." Last season the Falcons fumbled 42 times.

"For the first time in our history," he continued, "we now have a quality depth at most of the positions. And this is a must if you expect to win in the National Football League. Our attitude in 1973 is one of expecting to win and not just hoping to. Our players must hit the field with the attitude of expecting to win every time we take the field."

Off season trades included Bob Lee, a guarterback acquired from Minnesota with linebacker Lonnie Warwick, defensive tackle Mike Tilleman from the Oilers, linebacker Tom Roussel and wide receiver Al Dodd, both acquired from New Orleans.

All Pro defensive end Claude Humphrey, linebacker Tommy Nobis and running back Dave Hampton are the Falcons' nominees for Vitalis' Man of the Year. Atlanta fans get to cast their ballots in this national election on Nov. 4, the day the Falcons play the Rams in Atlanta.

Frank Wall, president of the Atlanta Falcons had this to say about Atlanta's prospects in a recent Falcon Facts newsletter. "While I will not predict a Super Bowl trip this season," Wall wrote, "the National Football League is too competitive for any team to make such a brazen promise-I will predict that we will continue to roll toward that goal and that .500 football will not be our way of rewarding 1,000 per cent football fans like ours have again proved to be."



CHICAGO BEARS

Chicago's offense, which last year almost made history with an almost-1,000-yard running quarterback, will have a more orthodox look this year. Acquired via trades were running back Carl Garrett from New England

and tight end Craig Cotton. If head coach Abe Gibron can make Bobby Douglass stay in the pocket most of the time, provide better protection, and convince the quarterback that guys like Garrett can handle the running chores well, who knows what might develop.

Garrett joins holdover running backs Jim Harrison and Don Shy, Cyril Pinder, Joe Moore and Roger Lawson. A healthy Lionel Antoine could lift the line, where returnees include tackles Randy Jackson and Bob Asher, guards Gley Holloway and Bob Newton and center Rich Cody.

Gibron is planning to use his No. 1 draft pick, 250-pound defensive end Wallace Chambers and a No. 2 pick for defensive tackle Gary Hrivnak to bolster the defense. Dick Butkus again anchors the linebackers in the middle.

If the Bears are to come out of hibernation, Gibron must have an improved new look at quarterback, ie, better passing. The receivers seem capable and Garrett gives the runners credibility. There is no time for experimenting, what with Dallas and Minnesota the first two Sundays on the schedule.



DALLAS COWBOYS

It's something of an awkward position when your plan is to come back and you really haven't been away. But the Dallas Cowboys' level of excellence over the past seven seasons has placed the club in precisely that position.

NFC titlist in 1970 and 1971 and the World Champions in 1972, the Cowboys bowed out in the NFC Championship Game with Washington last New Year's Eve. So, despite a most respectable record of 10-4, it was no cigar as far as the Cowboys were concerned.

They aim to correct that in 1973, the club's 14th year in the National Football League. In the last seven of those years since the expansion Cowboys turned the corner, the club has compiled a 73-23-2 record, the best in the NFL.

And even more impressive is the NFL record the club holds for consecutive times in the playoffs...seven.

"The Cowboys," says Coach Tom Landry, "are basically the same team that won the Super Bowl two years ago. I still feel that we possess the talent. I just don't feel that we are an old team as yet.

"I think we will bounce back this year, even though we actually had a good year in 1972 to go to the NFC Championship Game.

"I never felt we played as well as we could during 1972. Basically, coming off the Super Bowl year we simply didn't seem to have the winning edge. You must develop a winning edge to go all the way and we were never able to establish it.

"Whether it was the injury to Roger Staubach early that threw us off or the later injuries to Bob Lilly and others in the defensive line, I don't know.

"It could be either one. But it also could be the fact we won the Super Bowl and we couldn't get back to the same emotional level.

"Right now, I don't think we have the problem of not having the right people. I just think our attitude must be such that we want to win it bad enough to pay the price it takes to win the Super Bowl.

"I think you could look at any football team and always say you could be better at the different positions, but I know our team is capable of winning with the personnel we have. We just don't have any area that we are really in trouble at this point."

For the Cowboys to return to the throne the first order of business will be to unsaddle the Washington Redskins, still regarded to be the team to beat along with Dallas in the NFC East.

Landry does, however, see the NFC East on the upswing. He bases this on the return to prominence of the Giants. "The Giants are capable of beating any team in the East," he says, "and therefore could be a factor."

The Coach also was impressed with the Philadelphia draft and thinks the Cardinals will launch an upswing.

Landry sees no revolutionary changes in the game this season.

"I think you will see more I-formation plays, but this has been a trend for some time and I feel it will continue. The running game is becoming more and more a factor, mainly because of the zone defense.

"Linebackers have to do a lot more outside control with the zone than before and it creates bigger gaps in the line. Therefore, the running backs are going to continue to be the dominant force in pro football.

"Defensively, the trend has been to the zone defense over the last few years and I think it will continue to be prominent along with the multiple defenses . . . overshifts, undershifts and stacks in the line."



DETROIT LIONS

The Lions' rut—second, second, second, for the last four seasons seems to have ended for Detroit as the Lions pursue their first title of any kind since 1957's NFL champions. Since 1970, the Lions established them-

selves as one of football's most prolific scoring machines (339 points, second in '72 NFC) but a porous defense (10th in NFC, surrendering 290 points) continues to plague the team's title ambitions.

The one key change that makes 1973 different from the other almost years is Don McCafferty, a 21-11-1 and Super Bowl V winner from Baltimore, as a replacement for Joe Schmidt.

McCafferty had to move fast in training camp since he won't have time as the season gets going with Pittsburgh, Green Bay, Atlanta and Minnesota in the first four weeks.

Offense wasn't changed much with a secure Greg Landry at the quarter-back helm (524 yards, 9 touchdowns on 81 carries rushing and 134 of 268 passes completed for 2,066 yards and 18 touchdowns). The offensive line is experienced and solid.

Defensive troubles were concentrated upon at camp where the Lions have lacked a pass rush for several seasons and which was second most vulnerable in the NFC to the rush in 72.

The final step to the top of the division won't be achieved by the Lions until the defense is tightened.



GREEN BAY PACKERS

Packer fans and their bumper stickers had prophesied the return of the Pack since their last title in 1967, but skeptics were dubious that 1972 would be the year when the Pack would be back.

But the Pack did come back, admittedly not all the way, but the league has been served notice that again Green Bay is a team to be reckoned with, and for some time to come.

The defense became the best in the NFC. The young kicker, Chester Marcol, became the No. 1 scorer and field goal specialist in the NFL. The big backs were the NFC's most productive tandem and they didn't make the big mistake.

Inexperience did show at quarterback, as did a weakness in receiving, but this year the holes that required filling were fewer in number than in the five previous years and the available talent is there, in greater depth.

In short, Green Bay's prospects are the brightest since the title days of the 60's.

Head coach Dan Devine had this to say about the Packer secondary: "This was our biggest area of improvement in 1972, but we would still like to improve hitting and we worked long periods in training camp to overcome our lack of experience."

As a youthful team, the Packers are not especially vulnerable to lingering injury difficulties and the depth factor will overcome the inevitable attrition of a long campaign.

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LOS ANGELES RAMS

It's a "new look" all the way around as the Los Angeles Rams open the chase for the championship in National Football Conference's Western Division.

The Rams are under the guidance of a new coach in 40-year-old Chuck Knox along with a new staff and some brand, spanking new uniforms which remind one of the trappings worn by the team when it won the World Championship in 1951. It is hoped the new garb will presage another "Golden Era" for the Southern Californians.

Knox's immediate aim: "My immediate aim is to get organized and provide direction toward a winning end," Knox said. "Ultimately this means 47 players who care enough about winning to do all the things that it takes to win. Developing a fine defensive team will be a primary concern."

Knox explained his attitude towards defense. "The four teams that made it to the conference finals last year were all fine defensive teams," he pointed out. "If you have a fine defensive team you will have a chance to win every game that you play because your defense will keep you within range of your goal."

Knox's concern over the Rams defense stems mostly from the fact that opposing teams scored 20 touchdowns on passes, only one less than the conference's most porous defenders. The Rams ranked 12th of 13 teams in this category.

On the offensive side,

it is obvious that the Rams need to put more six-pointers on the board as they scored but 30 touchdowns on offense (the defense scored one) in fourteen games, an average of 2.2 per contest. In rushing the Rams were second and their 4.7 yards per attempt topped the conference. The Los Angeles passing offense was rated seventh and in total yardage gained the Rams were third.

Knox, noting the offseason trades which saw running backs Willie Ellison go to Kansas City and Bob Thomas to San Diego, said the development of depth in this department was one of the main goals in training camp.



MINNESOTA VIKINGS

In late July, Viking safety Karl Kassulke was thrown 60 feet from a motorcycle. In very critical condition after three hours of surgery, Kassulke, 32, was suffering from a badly compressed spinal cord, a head injury, a fractured left wrist and a fractured right shoulder. Doctors said if he lived he would probably be paralyzed below the waist.

Gary Larsen, a defensive tackle for the Vikings, wore No. 77 on his jersey last season. And last season the Vikings had a 7-7 won-lost record. This year, Larsen switched to No. 140, obviously hoping for a 14-0 season. Said head coach Bud Grant as

quoted in the New York Times, "I don't think he liked 77; it reminded him of last year." However, Grant said, NFL rules don't permit three digit numbers in games.

Coach Bud Grant said of his 1973 outlook: "Offensively we've changed some things we weren't doing as well as we would have liked. Defensively, we might have to change our deployment, or strategy, to cut off the run. We were one of the first to turn our line loose, to say the heck with it and send them in. We figured our pursuit was good enough that we'd catch them. Now teams often run in passing situations. They'll gain only a few yards, but we won't lose ten."

It will be interesting to see to what extent Grant has revised his basic theories.

Keep your eye on No. 1 draft pick Chuck Foreman for a clue to any new emphasis on offense; check Alan Page to see if he has regained his '71 MVP form and remember those defensive elders. If good health prevails, Minnesota does not figure to lose seven again.



NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

The New Orleans Saints, after a sagging 2-11-1 record in 1972, seem to be in better shape this season to win a few more games than last year.

The defensive linemen
—Billy Newsome, Bob
Pollard and Joe Owens—

would satisfy almost any NFL club. And the same at safety, by any two of Hugo Hollas, Doug Wyatt or Tommy Myers. Joe Federspiel has made excellent progress at middle linebacker.

The offense could be pretty good if the Saints stick with Danny Abramowicz and Bob Newland at wide receiver, despite their lack of super speed. Don Morrison, John Didion and the threesome of Jake Kupp, Del Williams and Royce Smith, will probably be consistent offensive starters. And, of course, Archie Manning at quarterback.

The problem the Saints concentrated on most in training camp centered on the offensive backfield. Coach J. D. Roberts said: "A team can't expect to log too many wins when it averages only 87.9 yards rushing per game as we did in 1972. Bob Gresham, a tough and durable player, led our ground-gainers with 381 yards. He's played right through painful injuries without even missing a practice. If his speed and power matched his attitude and desire, he'd be pressing for 1,000 yards. Who knows? Maybe this will be the year he turns everything on at one time. If it is, then we'll have far fewer worries."



NEW YORK GIANTS

Since the Giants last won the NFL Eastern Con-

ference title in 1963, they have produced just two winning records—a 9-5 finish in '70 and 8-6 last season. During this nineyear span, the New Yorkers biggest failing has been their inability to defeat the better teams. Of their 51 victories since '63, only 11 have been at the expense of teams who finished with .500 or better records. Last year New York stopped Dallas and San Francisco, but all six losses were to socalled "good" teams. There seems to be the problem and if the Giants are going to solve it in '73, the NFL schedule has presented them with the opportunity. Half of their games are against teams which reached the 1972 divisional playoffs.

After two home games against Houston and Philadelphia, the final five home games will be played at Yale Bowl in New Haven, Conn., which will be home for the Giants thru 1974 while construction is underway on new Giant Stadium, a few miles from Manhattan in New Jersey.

Some of head coach Alex Webster's weapons for 1973 include the NFC's top-ranked offense in 1972, manned by the NFL's top-ranked passer, Norm Snead, 1,000-yarder Ron Johnson, the NFL's top receiving tight end, Bob Tucker, a solid blocking line, and a defense which found a new leader in defensive end Jackie Gregory and permitted 115 fewer points than the '71 unit and the fewest points (247) by New York since 1961. If Snead has another big year and Ron Johnson enjoys continued good health and if the same steady defense puts a lot of pressure on those "good" teams the Giants are up against, then look for a good winning season.



PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

Mike McCormack learned a lot from his earlier teachers of the likes of Paul Brown, Vince Lombardi and George Allen. He faces a situation in Philadelphia resembling that which faced his teachers in their early. years-Where does a man begin when charged with halting erosion that has made the Eagles a lastplace team in four of the last five seasons, with last season's 2-11-1 record representative of the most feeble scoring unit pro football has witnessed since it went to a 14-game schedule in 1960.

Consequently, McCormack went for winners. Via the trade, he obtained quarterback Roman Gabriel, running back Norm Bulaich and defensive end Gerry Philbin.

As the third coach in three years, McCormack is optimistic, considering. "I believe now we can go out and put the ball in play with almost anybody on our schedule," he says.

His biggest gamble was Gabriel. Convinced that the Eagles could not win with young quarterback John Reaves or Pete Liske, McCormack traded away Harold Jackson, Tony Baker, two No. 1 and one No. 3 draft choices last year. The 11-year veteran Gabriel proceeded to collapse his lung the first day of camp and played off and on in 1972 to com-

plete 165 of 323 passes for 2027 vards.

There is only one way for Philadelphia to go—up. How far they can ascend, however, depends on McCormack's ability to communicate his confidence and the health of Gabriel's arm and Bulaich's legs.



SAN FRANCISCO 49ers

By now veteran contenders, albeit frustrated veteran contenders, the San Francisco 49ers head into the 1973 NFL campaign facing the toughest schedule they have had in the past three years and nagged by a few problems that could cause trouble enroute to a fourth-consecutive winning season.

Since its inception in 1970, the NFC's Western Division has known only one champion, the San Francisco 49ers. And San Francisco is the only team in the NFL to have won three consecutive divisional titles under the current setup.

Despite that record of success, the 49ers have also lived with frustration in each of the three years because they have not been able to break through the NFL's championship round and into the Super Bowl.

This year, although most of the ingredients which have made the past three seasons are still available, the chore facing San Francisco could be far tougher.

First problem, the schedule.

In addition to the an-

nual cliff-hanging battle in their own division with Los Angeles, Atlanta and New Orleans, the 49ers take on both Super Bowl teams, Miami and Washington, and division winners Green Bay and Pittsburgh along with Minnesota, Detroit, Denver and Philadelphia in the regular season.

Survival after running that gauntlet will be a major achievement in itself.

Specifically at the team level there are two major concerns.

In 1972 the running game, which had ranked fifth in the NFC the previous season, dropped to a puzzling 10th and was inconsistent throughout. Example: In a three-week span, against Atlanta, Green Bay and Baltimore, San Francisco ran for 189 yards, 21 yards and 205 yards.

The fact that San Francisco was the only NFL division winner that didn't have a 1,000-yd. runner (V. Washington was tops with 468), yet managed to lead the NFC in scoring with 353 points, indicates the rest of the club's game was working pretty well. Obviously, a turn-around on the ground could make a big difference.

The other team-level problem developed at middle linebacker as the season came to a close. Veteran starter Ed Beard was injured in the final game and underwent his second knee operation in the off-season. Frank Nunley, who began the season as the starter, battled injury all year long and had an inconclusive season.

Thus, from an overall view, there are more positives than negatives in San Francisco's 1973 prospectus and the club should be a strong contender again, but the neg-

atives are of such proportions that they could become major stumbling blocks if left unattended.



ST. LOUIS CARDINALS

Saddled with 4-9-1 records in each of the past two seasons, the Cardinals have been restructured by managing general partner William V. Bidwill. A major move was the hiring of the offensive-minded Coryell, who had won an amazing 83 per cent of his games in 12 years at San Diego State.

Joe Sullivan, assistant general manager with Washington in 1971-72, was brought in as director of operations, in charge of personnel transactions. In addition, George Boone and Larry Wilson were named heads of the Cardinals' college and pro scouting departments.

Coryell coaches a team that ranked second last in both total offense and defense among the National Football League's 26 members last year. "All we want to do," said the coach, "is be an aggressive and intelligent football team and go after people. We've worked on both offense and defense, and we particularly hope we've added some punch to our passing attack."

Weakened last year by injuries, the Big Red's offensive line looks good this season. Back are tackles Ernie McMillan and Dan Dierdorf, guards Conrad Dobler, Tom Banks and Bob Young and Wayne Mulligan, all

of whom started last year.
Other contenders included veteran Chuck
Hutchison, and high draft
picks Brahaney and
auard Fred Sturt.

The Cardinals also are hoping for better results from their defensive line. Tackle Bob Rowe heads the list of returning starters, which also includes ends Don Brumm, Ron Yankowski and Martin Imhof and tackle John Richardson. Top newcomers are Butz and veterans Roger Finnie, Willie Lee Jones and Lloyd Edwards, all acguired in off-season trades.

Jim Bakken, the NFL's sixth-leading all-time scorer with 905 points, returns for his 12th season to handle the Big Red's place-kicking while Anderson and Keithley will share the early-season punting duties.



WASHINGTON REDSKINS

It figured George Allen would be the one to turn Watergate into a sidebar, which he did for one day, anyway . . . The Redskin coach on July 19th traded his first round draft choice in 1975 and a number two draft choice in 1976 to San Diego for controversial running back Duane Thomas . . .

As early as two years ago Allen expressed an interest in Thomas when the complex running back was having problems with the Dallas Cowboys. The Redskin coach believes he can achieve a rapport with any football player, including

Thomas. . .

The trade came in the midst of a holdout by Larry Brown, the league's MVP in 1972. Brown, although having one year left on a three-year contract, was seeking additional security from the Redskins in the form of four more years playing time and employment when his playing days are over. In lieu of the way Brown plays, and to the extent in which he is used, his request for more security was reasonable. . .

Allen, as he did last year, has installed Bill Kilmer as the team's number one quarterback over Sonny Jurgensen. Jurgensen, 39, is attempting a comeback after rupturing his Achilles last year. Kilmer, coming off an excellent campaign, will keep the starting job as long as the Redskins win.

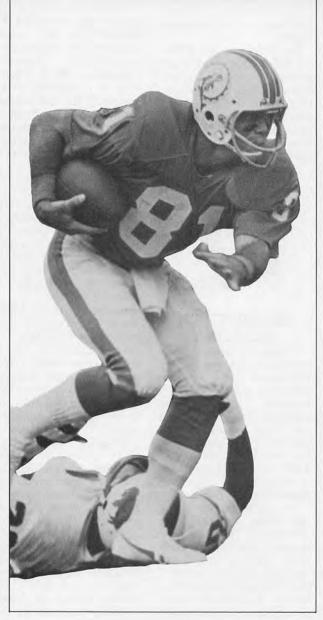
Jon Jaqua, a Redskin special teams star, left camp before the first practice and returned to his home in Eugene, Ore. Jaqua had a serious groin injury last year and his playing in the Super Bowl severely impaired its recovery. . .

George Nock, a running back the Redskins acquired in 1972 from the New York Jets, is attempting to recover from off-season knee surgery. Nock rarely played last year after injuring the knee in an exhibition

game... Vetera

Veteran quarterback Mike Taliaferro, whom the Redskins picked up for their taxi squad last year, retired... Ken Houston, whom Allen acquired in the off-season, is battling Brig Owens and Rosey Taylor for one of the safety spots. Houston appears to be the strong safety, with either Taylor or Owens getting the nod at free safety.

Howard Twilley MRCLUTCH



■ Although the Miami Dolphins ran the ball three times for every time they threw it, they beat the Washington Redskins with the pass. The Champs of Super Bowl VII opened their first scoring drive on their own 37 and racked up the touchdown when Bob Griese connected on a 28-yard pitch—not to the glamorous, mercurial Paul Warfield—but to the Dolphins' "other end," Howard Twilley, on a dazzling picture play that was to set the tone for the Floridians' near perfect afternoon of football.

It was, undoubtedly, the outstanding offensive gem of the match, and Howard Twilley was the one who brought it off as he took the defender (left cornerback Pat Fischer) deep to the inside before cutting back to the outside for the catch. One of the best in the business, Fischer got taken like a drunk being fleeced by a pickpocket.

And yet, when the game was over and credits were being handed out in the jam-packed Dolphins locker room beneath the cavernous Coliseum, Howard Twilley was virtually the forgotten man.

He makes the big play, but, then, he's expected to, and does it with such savoir faire that it often goes unheralded. It has been that way for the craggy-faced Texan ever since he reported to the new franchise back in 1966.

One of three original Dolphins, Howard Twilley never has opened a campaign as a member of the starting team since Joe Robbie hired Don Shula away from Baltimore, but he never has failed to win a first-string assignment each of the last three seasons.

Oh, he's well known in Oklahoma where, as captain of the University of Tulsa football team, he set 10 NCAA pass-receiving marks and made consensus All-American. Voted college Lineman of the Year in 1965, after catching 134 passes for 1,779 yds. and 16 touchdowns, and winding up with a record 127 points. He played in the North-South Shrine Game and was named outstanding player in the Senior Bowl.

And, then, he became a draft pick (No. 12) of the new-born Dolphins, dropping out of sight as completely as Judge Crater.

"I came to camp with a post-operative cast on my knee (he hurt it in a Tulsa oldtimers game)," he explains, "and when I finally got into the line-up a fractured cheekbone, courtesy of Kansas City's Fred (The Hammer) Williamson, finished me for the last eight games."

Continued on Page 76



CLEVELAND BROWNS

Ivy League football players who have made it big in the National Football League are a rare breed indeed.

Pro scouts for many years paid little heed to the Ivy Leaguers until a fellow named Calvin Hill came along in 1969. The ex-Yale star was selected in the first round by the Dallas Cowboys and there were many raised eyebrows at the time.

Hill then exploded for almost 1,000 yards rushing as a rookie and was voted rookie of the year to raise the prestige of

the Ivy League.

Since their founding 28 years ago, the Browns have had but two Ivy Leaguers on their roster, Bob Oristaglio of Penn. and Don Colo of Brown. The former played only briefly in 1951 but Colo was a very capable defensive tackle from 1953 through 1958.

Now Carl Barisich, a big 6-4, 255 pound defensive tackle of Princeton and Cleveland's 11th round draftee of 1973, is making his presence felt. While Barisich isn't going to send Walter Johnson and Jerry Sherk to the ranks of the unemployed, he will have to be reckoned with.

Strong and agile, he was among the most prominent newcomers among the defensive linemen at training camp.

Intelligent and articulate, Barisich won't have to worry about making a living in the event that he fails to make the grade with the Browns. He has a civil engineering degree from Princeton

and has had attractive offers from banking and brokerage institutions where he ultimately expects to settle.

However, he views professional football as a worth-while detour to his life's work. "I realize the Ivy League hasn't produced nearly as many good football players as other leagues but it really comes down to the man you are, not the team you played for," he states.

"I'm happy to have this chance with a good club and I'll just wait it out and find out whether I'm good enough. Many pro players come from small schools, why shouldn't my chances be as good

as theirs?

"I won't set the world on fire and I don't expect to be rookie of the year. This team has two of the best tackles in the league in Johnson and Sherk. I just want to be a solid, good player."

Oddly enough, Barisich views his fine educational background as a good advantage in his bid for a position with the Browns. "I won't have to press as much," he explained. "I have a job offer from a New York bank, second largest in the world."

Asked whether this situation might not rob him of the drive and desire in the highly competitive National Football League, Barisich replies, "Not at all. I've come this far in football, now I'd like to be successful in the highest type of competition. Few people in the country can say they've been in proball and I'm going to give it all I've got."

Barisich, a native of Ridgefield, N. J., passed up scholarships in several big schools including Penn State and Duke in favor of his home state school. He was an All-Ivy League lineman and also performed for the Princeton track team. His marks of 56-1 for the shotput and 168-4 for the discus are school records.

Milt Morin, Cleveland's big tight end, spent much of the off-season on Cape Cod where he purchased a cottage and secured an option on some land where he expects to erect a country store. Milt's wife Ellen is expecting their second child this fall.

Signs reading "Cockroft's Commandos" popped up around the
Browns' practice field, an
outgrowth no doubt of the
"Gerela Gorillas" posters
which Pittsburgh Steeler
fans displayed last year
honoring their favorite
kicker.



DENVER BRONCOS

Head coach John Ralston was pleased this summer with the condition in which his players reported to camp. Several veterans sported new profiles they figured would help them in the quickness department. Leroy Mitchell showed up at a trim 180, linebacker Ken Criter was down to 205. linebacker Mike Simone was an even 200 and linebacker Fred Forsberg was down to 223.

But the nicest part of the camp was the attitude of the players. Most players are agreeing with quarterback Charley Johnson who feels that Denver will definitely be a playoff contender in 1973. Charley cites the fact that the coaching staff has had a year to work together, that he and his receivers know each other a lot better

(none were in training camp last summer), and the team is coming off two strong performances at the close of the 1972 season to give them the momentum needed for a fast start.

Head coach John Ralston is dedicated to changing the Broncos into a zone defense-oriented squad from the bumpand-run used almost exclusively in the past. As the first step, veteran cornerback Bill Thompson was switched to strong safety, replacing Charles Greer who moved to the free safety post.

Defensive back Steve Preece was the "track" champion for the Broncos this year, covering the mile and a half run in 7:59. He was closely followed by linebacker Ken Criter, wide receiver Bill Van Heusen and running back Bobby Anderson.

Fastest of the Bronco rookies was wide receiver Al Marshall, who was clocked at 4.5 twice. Marshall was Denver's tenth round draft choice from Boise State.



HOUSTON OILERS

Sid Gillman, new general manager of the Houston Oilers has been doing a heads-up job of managing. His forays into the coaches quarters and publicity departments have heralded a new era for the team. So much activity is going on, in fact, that some people can see it extending into team management and possibly clashing with head coach Bill Peterson. Some folks are even wondering aloud if Peterson will last the season if the Oilers get off to a bad start.

Houston's Rice Stadium is the site of Super Bowl VIII next January. Consequently, the season ticket purchases were heading toward a club record before the season began. And that for a team that finished last season with a 1-13 record.



KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

The one consistent thing about the Kansas City Chiefs and their winning tradition is the way that Head Coach Hank Stram approaches football. "Football is a game of Now." That's what Stram said on the eve of the initial Super Bowl, and it is still the keystone to his philosophy as the Chiefs begin the 1973 season six years and one World's Championship later. "We are geared for NOW.-And, as a result, everything that we do as a football team is predicated on the effect that it will have in helping us fulfill our commitment to winning."

The record of the winningest team in the American Football League and that of its only surviving original head coach attests to both the effectiveness and relevancy of Stram's singularly purposeful approach to his work. Accordingly, it comes as no great surprise that Stram's utilization of this year's collegiate draft was secondary to his restructuring of certain team needs via a flurry of activity in the trade mart. The ability

of the newly obtained veteran performers to contribute to the Chief's winning tradition is evident in the fact that all five players, at one time or another, have had starting roles in either playoff competition, or postseason all-star contests.

George Seals, a nine year starter at both quard and defensive tackle, was -of course-obtained from the Chicago Bears at the start of the 1972 regular season, and after being with the team for a full season, Seals stands ready to contribute further to the revamped Kansas City pass rush. At the same time, the player picked up by the Bears with the Chiefs first round draft selection has yet to play a down in the NFL. "Seals," pointed out Stram, "is in effect our number one pick in the 1973 draft, but unlike a rookie, he is already familiar with our system as well as a capable and proven performer."

Then, on the day of the draft itself, Stram negotiated for the rights to both Willie Ellison and Pete Beathard from the Rams, as well as Francis Peay, an offensive tackle with seven years worth of experience as a starter for both the New York Giants and the Green Bay Packers. Stram was extremely pleased with the outcome of such selective bartering. "We had two second round draft selections, and as a result, after we picked Gary Butler to play tight end with Houston's choice, we felt justified in giving up our own pick to the Rams along with Bob Stein in what we considered to be a fair exchange for the caliber of runner that we got in the person of Willie Ellison.

The former Ram had been the club's leading rusher the past two seasons as well as a member of the NFL's elite 1,000 yard club. Such credentials prompted Stram to observe that Ellison "certainly has proven that he can play in the NFL."

"There's no way in the world that you can trade for a quarterback with the skill, ability, and experience that Beathard has, especially if the price is only a fourth round draft choice who may or may not eventually be able to contribute to the continued success of your football team. Beathard, however, by virtue of that very experience is in a position to help us right now."

The trade that saw Peay finally come to Kansas City seven years after he was the Chiefs second round selection in the 1966 pre-merger draft. served two purposes as outlined by Stram. "The really great thing about being able to get Peay from the Packers is not only will he give us added depth at offensive tackle, but there is also the additional fact that we were fortunate to obtain equal value for someone as talented as Aaron Brown who indicated prior to the trade that he would retire unless he could play closer to his home in Minneapolis. It was the kind of trade that helped both teams as well as the individuals involved."

So it is that Hank Stram enters his fourteenth season as the exclusive leader of the Chiefs/Texans with a philosophy that is unchanged and still predicated on winning. "Our entire personnel program is geared to the needs of our immediate situation. Everything is still done by design, and in order to maintain the continuing high level of efficiency, we felt that at the time of the draft we could not justifiably rely on the college material available to us as the sole means of enhancing the ability of our squad to accomplish its ultimate objective of winning the World's Championship.

"Accordingly, the Chiefs' Mentor went out and completed more off-season transactions than ever before in a sustained effort that is indicative of Stram's total commitment to winning that defines football as a game of NOW.

"Given the kind of combination that is afforded us by the return of so many proven veterans, plus the addition of people acquired in trades along with an enthusiastic crop of rookies and free agents will enable us to enter the season with the kind of competitive situation that we look for," concluded Stram.



MIAMI DOLPHINS

Larry Csonka, the Dolphins' two-time 1,000-yard ground gainer, knew that head coach Don Shula would be more determined this year than last when he lunched with his coach in midsummer.

"I could see the clouds forming even then—Shula was gearing himself up to scare the fat cats in camp," Csonka says. "Kidding him, sort of, I recited his whole opening speech—how Green Bay was the only team that ever came back to win two straight Super Bowls, and how all the others lost the second time around.

"I thought last year he was dedicated. But this year I've got an idea he's more serious and more determined to go back than he's been about anything he ever set out to do. I saw his metabolism speeding up, his eyes getting buggy and his hairline jerking the way it does once in a while."

Dolphins' quarterback Bob Griese, now in his seventh season, still is looking to improve. "I know I have room for improvement in all areas—preparation, physical, mental," Griese points out. "When you get to the point where you think you know it all, somebody's going to make you look bad."

Dolphins' cornerback Tim Foley has a distinct point of view about the value of athletics. He says: "There is a tendency these days to put down the value of athletics. But I think that's wrong. Young boys have an awful lot of energy to burn. I know myself I was a kind of rebellious kid. I wasn't mean or anything, but I was very aggressive. I needed to get a smack in the mouth and learn how to take it. I needed to be put down, to learn what it was like to drop a pass or have one intercepted. To have that happen and be able to live with it.

"Now I see that a lot of communities are deemphasizing sports for their kids," he continued, "and I think that's too bad. I know that the academic side is very important, but I really think that sports are important, too."



NEW YORK

Coach Weeb Ewbank did one of his best selling jobs in talking Larry Grantham into retirement. An American Football League original, the linebacker had the shock of retirement eased by a new job—color commentator on the Jets' radio broadcasts. Thus, another instant sportscaster is born.

As an undersized linebacker-6 feet, 210 pounds -Grantham played in more games, 173, than any other member of the team and was third on the all-time Jet list of interceptions with 24. As a color man, he succeeds Sam DeLuca, another ex-Jet who now works for NBC on NFL telecasts, and joins Marty Glickman, ex-Giant broadcaster, on the Jet radio broadcasts.

"I'm really looking forward to working on the radio braodcasts," Grantham said upon making the switch. "After 13 seasons with the Jets, I certainly will regret not playing alongside my friends, but I'm fortunate in being able to keep my association with the team."

Grantham is continuing his vice presidential duties with the First National Bank of Jackson, Miss.

Picture Day always is one of the early rituals in training camp each year, and on this year's Picture Day in the Jet camp, one of the more interesting comments came from a rookie, Bob Parrish. Said the Duke University graduate, "My father would just as soon see me in a picture in front of Duke Law School."

Speaking of pictures, the Jets estimate they give out 40,000 pictures of Joe Namath every year. That makes the quarterback about 20 times as popular as his coach, whose picture goes out to about 2,000 photo collectors each year.

No one was asking for any pictures of Steve Thompson for a while because the defensive lineman didn't play for a season and a half. He left the club during the exhibition schedule in 1971 and didn't return until midway through last season. When he left, it was "to follow the way of the Lord." Not long after he returned, he broke a leg.

"I met some people in Eugene, Ore., that I enjoyed being with," Thompson explained. "Mentally I was having some problems, but there were just some things I wanted to do. I couldn't really get 100 per cent behind the program. It really wasn't an anti-football move when I left the team. I may have been sympathetic to some of those people, but it wasn't my idea. I felt the Lord gave me the freedom to go back."

The Jets took Thompson back and he entered this year "more excited about this season than any since high school."

The lets as a team were excited about the prospect of not having to face Bubba Smith twice this season. Commenting on the trade that sent a disaruntled Smith to Oakland, center John Schmitt said, "I'm very happy. Bubba played right on my nose and he was a load. I'm glad he's gone. We play Baltimore twice, but we don't play Oaklandunless it's in the playoffs and that's a possibility."

Then Schmitt and the rest of the Jets would be willing to take their chances with Bubba.



NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

Chuck Fairbanks, head

coach of the New England Patriots, took his team down to Washington at the invitation of George Allen, head coach of the Washington Redskins, for a scrimmage game during training camp. A crowd of 9,000 watched the multiple scrimmages in which seven Patriots were pitted against seven Redskins in passing drills and rushing plays.

The Redskins were the acknowledged winners. Said Coach Fairbanks: "I wanted our players to go against the best team we could find so we could get an evaluation of how far we have to go."

The Pittsburgh Steelers refused a similar invitation to scrimmage the Redskins. Since the scrimmages were filmed, the aspiring Steelers were not anxious to have their players on film, for Redskin examination.

The Patriots sent their three first round draft choices to the College All-Star game against the Miami Dolphins in late July. They were: John Hannah, Sam Cunningham, and Darryl Stingley.

Sam Bam Cunningham, the Patriots' second first round draft choice, was awarded the Ernie Davis Leadership Award for the West Squad at the Coaches All-American game at Lubbock, Texas. The powerful running back and super blocker had a great night in leading the West squad to a 20-6 victory over the East. Cunningham scored one touchdown and picked up good yardage while sticking out as the best blocking back on the field.

The Gridiron Club of Greater Boston honored William H. Sullivan, the Patriots' owner, as "Man of the Year" recently. Sullivan was feted for his long and devoted service to the game of football on all levels.



OAKLAND RAIDERS

The Oakland Raiders now stand as the National Football League team with the best won-loss record for the last 10

years.

The highly successful 1972 season propelled Oakland into the top spot for the decade with a record of 94-36-10, a .723 winning percentage. The Baltimore Colts are second at 97-39-2 (.713) and the Cleveland Browns hold third at 95-43-2 (.688).

The last six years have been even more spectacular for Oakland, with five divisional championships and a record of 63-15-6, an unchallenged .808 mark, best in the NFI.

Oakland's 10-3-1 record last year was the fourth best in the team's history and the fourth best in the NFL for '72. Only Pittsburgh (11-3) and Super Bowl contestants Washington (11-3) and Miami (14-0) produced better seasons than the youthful Raiders.

The Raiders had the NFL's best balanced offense, rushing for a team record 2,376 yards and passing for 2,369. The rushing accounted for 50.07 of the Raiders' total offense, the passing for 49.93 per cent. Oakland ran the most plays (915) in the league and its average gain per play of 5.2 yards was fifth best in the NFL.

The Silver and Black equalled one NFL record and set 10 team standards. The NFL record was for total first downs, the Raiders' 297 equalling the number registered by the 1968 Dallas Cowboys. Team marks were set for first downs, first downs rushing, rushing attempts, rushing yardage, rushing average, rushing first downs in one game and team seasonal passing percentage.

Defensively, the Raiders were one of three AFC teams to limit opponents to only 3.8 yards per rushing attempt for the season. The Raiders were 3-0 versus National Football Conference teams while winning the AFC Western Division title for the fifth time in the last six years.



PITTSBURGH STEELERS

In 1972 the Pittsburgh Steelers did a lot of things well and, as a result, they compiled the second best regular season record in the NFL. Their overall goal in 1973 is to improve in as many areas as possible and to maintain the level of excellence achieved last season.

The trait that most characterized the Steelers last season was consistency. In playing 22 games—six pre-season, 14 regular season, and two post-season—the Steelers lost five times. Two of the losses were by four points, one by two, one by three, and one by five.

Another outstanding characteristic is the team's youth. On the 1973 pre-season veteran roster only four players were listed as having reached the age of thirty, and one of them was Punter Bobby Walden. It is a squad which averages just over 25 years of age and has

less than five years pro experience per man. If nothing else, these facts illustrate how young and inexperienced Chuck Noll's team was last season. For this reason alone, it is logical to expect a degree of improvement.

Noll does not feel his team has a major weakness and does not expect anyone to move in and become a fixture as has been the case with first year players in the previous four years of his term. Only two players were lost by retirement. Defensive tackle Ben McGee had an outstanding year in 1972 but decided that after nine years he has had enough.

Much of the time the Steelers played for the turnover and the strategy turned out to be the difference on many occasions. They had the best takeaway-giveaway ratio in pro football. They had a plus 22 compared to a minus seven in 1971.

Another source of great pride to Noll was the work of the special teams. These units carried out their assignments as close to perfection as possible with the longest punt return against the Steelers being 30 yards and the longest kickoff return 47 yards. In conjunction with this, punter Bobby Walden and placekicker Roy Gerela had outstanding years and were frequently responsible for providing the team with outstanding field position.



SAN DIEGO CHARGERS

It had to happen and it

did—quickly. On an early play in the first San Diego Charger training camp scrimmage early in the summer, the new Charger quarterback barked the signal. Nothing happened. Then laughter. John Unitas, the new quarterback, had called for "Yellow 25," a formation of the Baltimore Colts.

Peeping out from the catacombs of the AFC west, the San Diego Chargers see sunshine on the horizon. Coach Harland Svare sees a "sharply improved team," while Charger watchers are intrigued by the addition of a living legend, John Unitas, quarterback destroyer Coy Bacon and Viennese soccer player, Gunter Enz.

Svare is plotting the outline for a title contention this year. He says, "There isn't much separating us from Oakland, Kansas City and Denver. On defense, we must advance from respectable to good. On offense, we must whip the turnover problem."

San Diego was burdened with 48 turnovers last year while earning a record of 4-9-1. Despite a No. 5 ranked AFC defense and a No. 6 ranked offense, the Chargers had the misfortune of tacking the toughest schedule in the NFL in a year of rebuilding. "On defense we accomplished our goal," says Coach Svare of 1972, "we went from worst to respectable. On offense we developed a strong running attack. We learned what it means to control the football."

During the spring quarter at the University of Cal. at San Diego, Coach Svare will switch from coach professor to teach a six session course on "Psychological and Technical Aspects of Professional Football."

Dick Butkus

"He reacts well and he moves to the point of his coverage very well along the line, especially on the run," said another knowledgeable football man.

In the opinion of a man who knows the Kansas City defense well, the Chiefs will commit their linemen to certain holes and ask Lanier to fill certain other areas depending on the flow of the play. "He does that excep-

tionally well," the man says.

Of all the first-class middle linebackers, an official says, the 6-foot-1, 245-pound Lanier is the most complete linebacker. "He'll grade very high in all categories," he notes. "He has good range, he's good on the pass drop and the run, he's very strong, he's smart and he's a hard-hitting guy. He plays more under control than Butkus. He plays with a controlled aggressiveness.

Larry Csonka has come up against Lanier and his variety of talents, and he's always been impressed."It's bad enough running into a grizzly bear," the Miami runner says, "but it's murder when he's a smart grizzly."

Opponents haven't necessarily refered to Mike Curtis as a bear, but the word animal has been used more than

once. Sometimes with good reason.

In Baltimore scrimmages, for instance, Curtis takes out after his teammates as vigorously as he does with opponents on Sunday afternoons. In fact, one day Don Shula, who was then the Colt coach, had to sit Curtis down on the sidelines for 45 minutes to cool off after he viciously tackled fullback Terry Cole.

Don McCafferty, Shula's successor who himself has been succeeded, never gave Curtis a cooling off period, but he frequently held his breath when the 6-foot-2, 232-pound defender made contact with his teammates. "Mike can be dangerous to our own people sometimes,"

McCafferty once said.

Curtis has a style that is somewhat similar to Lanier's. Sometimes he attacks with his strength, other times he relies on his quickness. No matter which way he chooses, though, he is successful more often than not when the play is anywhere near him.

"He's similar to Lanier in all-around ability," one NFL many says. "Lanier's a little more physical, but I have to rank Curtis right up there with Butkus and Lanier. I find it hard to differentiate between those three guys. They're all

very good."

Another observer feels Curtis leads the way on the Colt defense by his aggressiveness and his spirit, neither of which ever seem to lag. "It's the enthusiasm and the way he plays the game," the observer commented. "But he also has the talent to go with his enthusiasm. He originally was a fullback and he has great range and speed. He reacts very quickly and very well. For that reason he's very hard for an interior lineman to block. He simply outruns blockers. He reacts so quickly that many times he simply outmaneuvers the blocking situation."

The range and the quickness Curtis picked up along his way toward the NFL. The meanness he seemed to have even as a younster. When he was three, for example, he used to put baby chickens in a milk bottle and crush them to death with a stick, he says. When he was five, he would take a fresh box of crayons and press them against a



Curtis sometimes attacks with his strength, other times with his quickness. No matter which way he chooses, he is successful more often than not.

hot radiator until they melted. "I got some kind of kick out of watching them melt and run down on the floor," he recalls.

No he simply delights in knocking people down and watching them writhe in pain and frustration from his blows.

Nick Buoniconti doesn't overpower people. At 5-feet-11 and 220 pounds, he would seem more likely to be the one who is overpowered. His size, in fact, is the one thing people hold against him when evaluating middle linebackers. Despite that size, though, Buoniconti manages to merit inclusion in the elite group of NFL middle linebackers.

How does he do it? With his head, or more precisely, with what's inside his head, and his quickness.

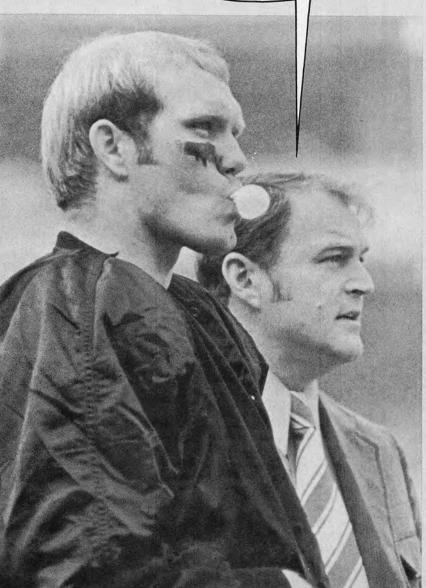
"He depends on his smarts," one expert says. "He's smarter than others." $\,$

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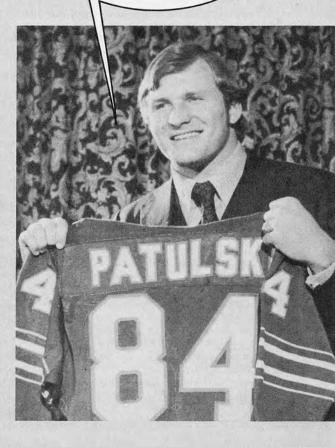
It's that time again—that impossible time when action, gesture, expression, or situation is caught by the camera in such a way that your Pro Quarterback editors must respond with their questionable sense of humor, resulting in a few more additions to the horrible collection of...

50 YARD LINES

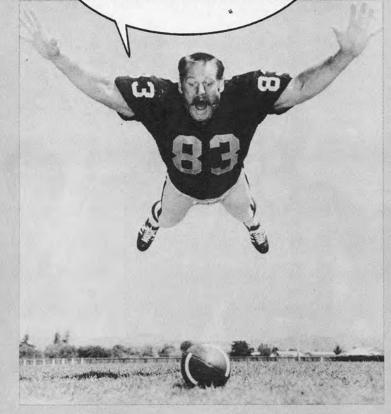
You really take this game seriously, don't you kid?



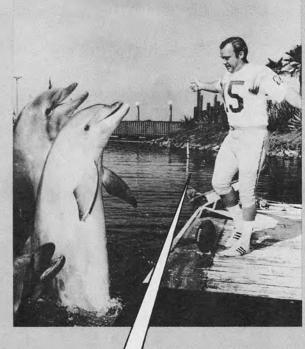
... but thanks to X-15, the new washday miracle, my jerseys come out clean as new!



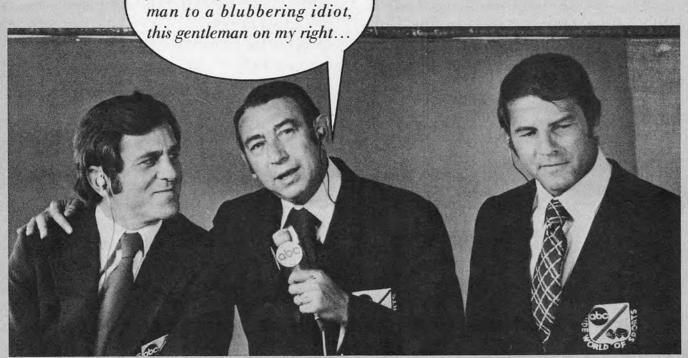
I think I got it this time... first I land on the ball, swallow it, then look at the camera and say—"I can't believe I ate the whole thing!"



... and if that didn't convince you that football reduces a



Somehow, when they told me I'd be kicking against the Dolphins, I thought they meant something else...



How far will your job Here's what the New



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The Drug Problem



Drug Problem

of that exists. When I came into the league 11 years ago, drugs were much more common. Very few players use stimulants today."

Russell should know. Besides molesting ball carriers as an All-Pro linebacker, he is chairman of the NFL Players Association Health and Safety Committee. He has led a team of player representatives in search of evidence concerning the drug situation from the most strategic vantage point: the locker room. He has filed a report with Commissioner Rozelle and the Staggers Committee, which is investigating the use of drugs on all levels of football for the House of Commerce.

In capsule form, the Russell report is an objective commentary on the drug situation which, he insists is blown out of proportion by the news media.

"Uppers are strictly forbidden by the Steelers," he says. "I have seen no evidence of anybody taking the greenies or whatever and, if there has been, the guy has obtained them on his own. I'm not saying that nobody in the league does it. I'm saying that it is the exception not the rule, which is what the public is being led to believe.

"I mentioned drugs to a lot of the young players and they think I'm nuts. I find the young players come to camp in much better shape than we did back in 1963. They don't need stimulants. What the hell, if they are coming from a drug culture we came from a beer culture.

"They know these stimulants don't make you a better player. A few years ago, I was involved in an incident which proved to one guy that external stimulation doesn't work. He had taken some uppers and after the game he told me he thought he played super. He changed his mind after he saw the films. 'I was horrible and I didn't even realize it' he said when he saw how he played. It distorted his objectivity."

Unlike a lot of jealous veterans, who abhor the mod player, his life-style, and his big bonus, Russell is im-

pressed with the new generation of players. In a stance that Archie Bunker would consider treason, Russell feels sorry for Reaves, Thomas and Rentzel and the way the NFL players' image is being polluted.

"There is no connection between the use of stimulants for football and smoking marijuana," he says. "There is a large piece of the population that thinks marijuana is not that horrible. Heroin laws should not apply to marijuana.

"The Surgeon General has determined that marijuana is non-addictive and not harmful to the health. At the University of Michigan, they give stiffer fines for illegal parking than they

do for being caught with pot. I think a kid gets a five dollar fine if he is caught smoking it.

"I talked to a young player on a flight to Vegas for the convention. I wanted to talk football. He asked me, 'Do you guys take drugs?' I became indignant. He says, 'I don't mean in football... I mean socially'. It's a social thing now, a matter-of-fact thing. He was talking about pot. Why should laws be so different? Some day we'll look back and laugh at it like Prohibition."

Which brings up an interesting question: what did the police and news editors do when the ancient NFL heroes got caught drinking illegal



Ed Garvey, chief counsel for the Players Association: "We have warned the athletes about letting the clubs use pain-killing drugs when they are injured. The clubs like to shoot up the injury, placing the athlete, his body and his livelihood in jeopardy."

hooch at the unlawful speakeasies?

Hank Reese, who played for the championship Giants in 1934, remembers an episode involving him and three other players at Temple University. They were apprehended in a hooch raid which resulted in a fight with the gendarmes.

Marijuana is as healthful as porridge compared to some of the old hooch which often caused total blindness, and sometimes caused the per-

manent loss of breath.

"We got caught at a speakeasy and we were stoned," Reese recalls. "Somebody said something smart to the cops and a fight broke out. When it was over we were taken to the station house. The desk sergeant laughed at us and told us how much he enjoyed watching us play. He released us and nobody ever knew about it.

"One of the reasons was because there was a young sportswriter with us when we got caught. He helped keep it quiet because he didn't want his wife to find out he was screwing around when he was supposed to be working. These young kids are good kids. They just can't get away with things the way we use to. The cops and the writers seem to be after them for some frustrating reason."

Reese also laughs at the notion that the use of stimulants is more flagrant now than yesteryear. "Football players have been using stimulants since I was a college kid," he said. "It's nothing new. With the Eagles I remember how a lot of us suddenly developed coughs on Saturday. We'd go to the doctor and he'd give us cough medicine (serptacocolene). It was an upper. It lifted me mentally, stimulated me for the game."

Reese giggled about the coughing epidemic and then he topped it with a true confession. "Suppose," he said, "the water buckets at the championship game next December were filled with bourbon or vodka? What would the sportwriters think about that? What would all the stuffed shirts say about the kids? They'd banish them from the league forever.

"Back in the 1934 title game when we (Giants) played the Bears, our guys filled the bucket with whiskey. I swear it. It was such a cold day and the ground was so hard . . . remember we came out with sneakers for the first time? Well, our water boy used whiskey to keep us going in the second half.

"Before the end of the game, the Bears found out what we had in the bucket. A lot of them came over dur-



Houston Ridge of the San Diego Chargers suffered a broken hip during a game with the Miami Dolphins in 1969. He did not know it until the effects of nine pills wore off.

ing the timeouts and begged us for a slug. We were having a regular booze party right there in the Polo Grounds and a full house was watching and didn't even know it."

The use of stimulants reached its ugly peak in the NFL around 1968 after a concentrated run of almost two decades. Commissioner Rozelle clamped down in 1969 with a directive which was posted in every locker room, forbidding the distribution of unprescribed drugs by the clubs. The NFL security force also makes the rounds during each training season, educating the players to the hazards of drug abuse on the field.

"We have never initiated an investigation into the use of drugs," says Jim Heffernan, a spokesman for Rozelle. "There is concern here but it would be

impossible for us to police the whole league. The clubs themselves must do it."

There was a time when some clubs looked the other way while the distribution of amphetamines and anabolic steroids went along as casually as the distribution of athletic supporters.

Assistant Coach X, who played in the NFL in the early 50's remembers how it was with a West Coast club: "It's nothing like it used to be. They used to put two pep pills in everybody's locker before a game. I think they called them 'Sweethearts'. I think they contained dexedrine. They were heart-shaped, little orange things.

"The game makes it necessary to be high mentally. Little players really

Drug Problem

need it. They need anything to lift themselves . . . it's the only way they can stick with all those monsters."

Running Back X, who recently retired after a very successful career, remembers how he had his best season, 1968, as a result of desbutal: "I took about three milligrams before the game and the same dosage at half-time. I had my best year. Running backs take the most punishment. The position requires the most stamina and energy. They gave it to me. I had no after-effects, or serious injuries due to it.

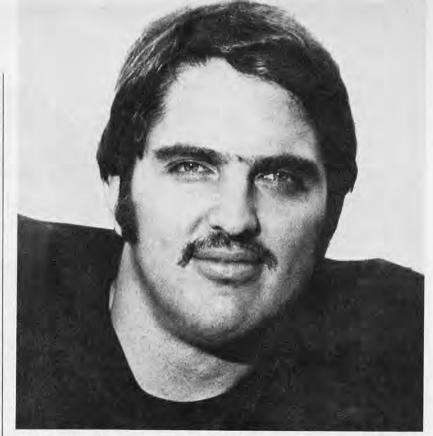
"Istopped taking them the next year and I didn't run as well. I was frightened off them by a young doctor who told me that they could cause a cardiac arrest because they hop up your system so much it puts a severe strain on the heart."

College Coach X recalls how he was introduced to the benefits of pep pills during the mid-50's by some Eastern All-Pros:

"We had a big game against Army coming up. We didn't stand a chance. I used to drink with some pro linemen. They told me about the pills. They even gave me a batch. I gave them to the kids on Saturday. They played over their heads, held Bob Anderson and those brutes to 14-0. We were losing only 7-0 until the last few minutes."

The blatant use of external stimulants reached outrageous proportions during the 1965-69 era, causing a sweeping crackdown across the league. San Diego Chargers' defensive lineman Houston Ridge recently was awarded a \$295,000 settlement as a result of an injury suffered while admittedly "drugged" during a game against the Miami Dolphins on Oct. 11, 1969.

Ridge suffered a broken hip but he did not know it until the following day when the effects of nine pills —including three desbutal and three muscle relaxants—wore off. He has undergone two operations and he must use a crutch when he walks. His suit prompted investigations by the California medical authorities and the county District Attorney's office. The investigations turned up some startl-



Andy Russell: "I mention drugs to a lot of the young players and they think I'm nuts. I find the young players come to camp in much better shape than we did back in 1963. They don't need stimulants."

ing evidence which would have involved criminal prosecution of several Charger workers except for the state's three-year statute of limitations in criminal prosecutions.

Depositions from Ridge, former Charger star Ron Mix, former coach Sid Gillman, Doctor E. Paul Woodward and trainer Jim Van Deusen revealed that as much as half the squad may have been given pills illegally.

Court records show that the Chargers purchased 10,000 pills per season with five persons in the front office capable of signing their names to what was called a "group prescription." Gillman's name was among those signed on the orders.

Each player was allowed two 15-milligram tablets of desbutal just before a game and a 15-milligram tablet at halftime. The San Diego DA's office is still in the process of checking pharmaceutical records to determine whether the Chargers had violated California laws by dispensing "dangerous drugs and narcotics without valid prescriptions". A conviction could bring with it a five-year-to-life sentence.

During that not-so-long-ago era, everybody was guilty: the club executives, coaching staffs, the medical help and the players. Commissioner Rozelle started the crackdown even though it is difficult for his office to patrol the entire league. The clubs

themselves took up the fight and the Players Association is continuing it.

"We're beginning to work out a method of educating the player," says Ed Garvey, chief counsel for the Players Association. "We have warned the athlete about letting the clubs use pain-killing drugs when they are injured, like down the homestretch. There's tremendous pressure on the player when the money's on the line. The clubs like to shoot up the injury (novocain injections), placing the athlete, his body, and his livlihood in jeopardy."

Garvey feels the same as Russell about the players who have been involved in the marijuana offense. He hopes the NFL office and the individual club do not take it upon themselves to suspend anybody as a result of the unfortunate incidents.

"I hope they talk to us first," Garvey said. "We have to defend the player and his opportunity to continue to work at his profession. If he goes to jail, and pays his fine, why should he also lose the opportunity to make the most out of what is a short career anyway . . . just because somebody is worried about the image of the game."

The use of hard stimulants has decreased dramatically in pro football during the last few years. The "image of the game" is not in need of pep pills.



Mr. David Mahoney, Mrs. Robert F. Kennedy and Mr. Lowell Perry are three of the seven member board of directors of NFL Charities. NFL Charities is a non-profit organization created by the 26 clubs in the National Football League.



Florida governor Ruben Askew shakes hands with Miami Dolphin owner Joe Robbie. Robbie was accepting on behalf of head coach Don Shula who was indoctrinated into the Florida Sports Hall of Fame.



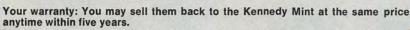
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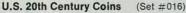
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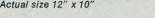
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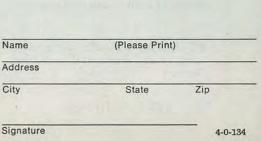
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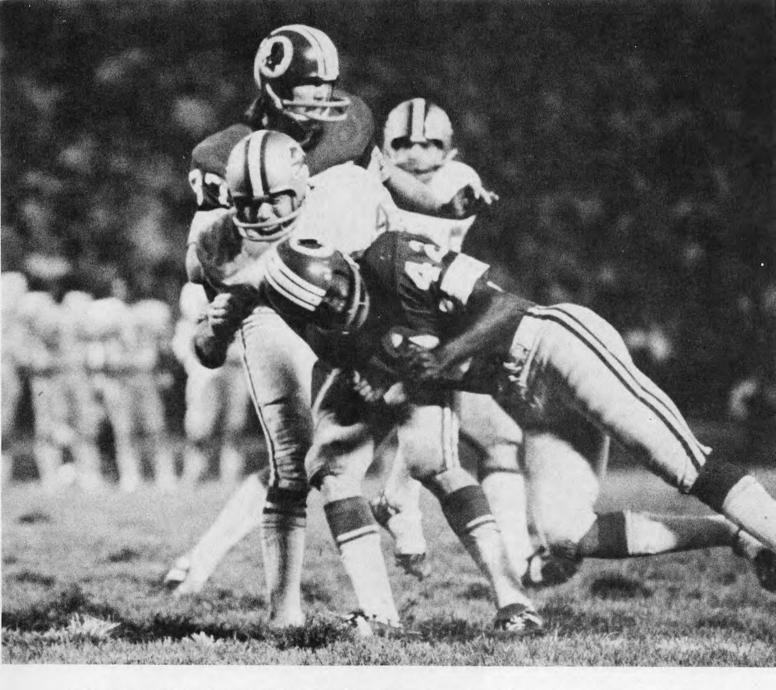




DUANE THOMAS:

- "They don't pay me to communicate. They pay me to play football and I do my job. If they want a man to communicate, they should hire Howard Cosell." Duane Thomas.
- "Can't no computer tell anyone what's on my mind"—Duane Thomas.
- "What goes out must come up." Duane Thomas.
- Duane Thomas, as quoted by Bob St. John on the joys of running: "You see shadows. Then there's a flash of daylight and you move through it, like a dream. I look at running as being like an art design. You can create anything you want with it. It can be a beautiful thing."

Duane Thomas has played for three teams in as many years. From the Cowboys in 1971 he went to the Patriots for three days before returning to Dallas and playing in the Super Bowl. In July, 1972, after refusing to join in Dallas practice sessions, he was traded again—to San Diego. During last season he dressed for only one game. And this July, Thomas was traded again,



UNSOLVED PUZZLE

By Don Freeman

to George Allen's Washington Redskins.

Once, in the heady carnival days before Super Bowl VI, when the Dallas Cowboys were preparing to play the Dolphins in New Orleans, a photographer asked Duane Thomas to move about six inches so that he could snap a shot of flanker Lance Alworth. Thomas obliged willingly.

"You moved eight inches," said

Lance with a smile. "You moved two inches too far."

Duane Thomas smiled, too. There were those who said it was his first smile in months. The estimate could be correct.

He's a handsome, personally likable young man with a built-in genius for carrying a football and also, it would appear, a vast capacity for inner rage, for self-torment and the

rapacious agony of perpetual unhappiness. When he does talk, and he talks to few people, Duane will recall that he knew happy times once, when he was playing at Lincoln High in Dallas, where he grew up, hard and tough, in one of the city's black ghettos.

From Lincoln, where he starred under Coach Floyd Iglehart, he acquired a scholarship to West Texas

Duane Thomas

State in Canyon, south of Amarillo. There he was a teammate of Mercury Morris who saw him, even then, as a budding Gale Sayers. His talent was obvious to all who could see. There was the time that Hamp Pool, scouting for the pros, was visiting West Texas State. Pool watched a sophomore running back on the field and shook his head in awe.

He turned to Tommy Bryant, the school's publicity man, and announced: "Tommy, right there is the best running back I ever saw in college."

"Better than Jimmy Brown?" Bryant inquired.

"As a college and pro prospect, yes," said Pool. "The best I've ever seen."

It was a view shared by the Dallas Cowboys who made Thomas their No. 1 draft choice that year, granting him a \$25,000 bonus. When he reported to camp, someone asked him if he felt he would start with the Cowboys.

"Well," said Duane, "that's what I'm making the team for, to start."

Asked where he ran best, Thomas shrugged. "Inside, outside and over," he replied.

"Can you catch the ball," the interviewer persisted.

"Like, I can catch the ball," Thomas said.

"How well do you block?"
"Like, I can block."

Like, in short, he can do everything. And he did, averaging 5 3 yards a carry in his rookie year. But problems surfaced at the season's end, at least some of them based on the Cowboys' refusal to revise, with a suitable boost, a three-year contract calling for a base pay of \$20,000. He spoke then of "personality conflicts, prejudice and jealousy. I saw no appreciation...for my hard work, my dedication, my sincerity."

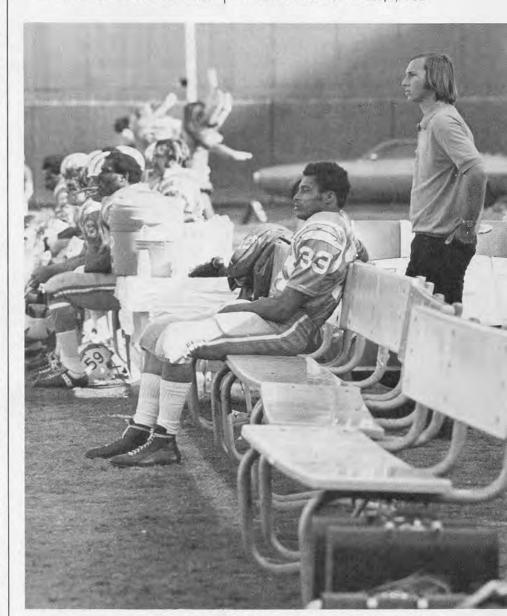
In July of 1971, he summoned the press to a conference in Dallas to outline his grievances publicly. Subsequently he was traded to the New England Patriots, where he remained for only three tension-filled days. "They told me to leave—face to face—just like that," Duane commented later. "So I came home."

It was a fortunate move for the Cowboys as Thomas enjoyed—if indeed he truly enjoys his accomplishments—a banner year. Although he didn't play until the fourth game, he ran for 793 yards and a 4.5 average, scoring 13 touchdowns. In the Super Bowl, he carried the ball 19 times for 95 yards and was instrumental in Dallas overwhelming Miami, 24 to 3,

That winter, a butted-out mari-

juana joint was found in a car which had been stopped for speeding by law officers in rural Hunt County, Texas. The driver was Duane Thomas. He had picked what is known as the toughest county in the toughest state in the union for such an offense. He was held and placed on probation. "One of the conditions of probation," said William Haddock, the probation officer, at the time, "is that he work faithfully at suitable employment as soon as possible."

By the summer of '72, as he reported to the Cowboys camp at Thousand Oaks, Cal., the hard shell which had encased this deeply trou-



Thomas impassively watched from the San Diego bench as the Chargers lost 34-28 to his former team, the Dallas Cowboys.

bled athlete had solidified. Mostly he locked himself behind the lonesome bars of his own withdrawn silence. But, occasionally, in answer to a request to talk about the past, for instance, he would engage in brief flights of philosophy: "We all can pay our debts to the past by putting the future in debt to ourselves."

And then, in July, an event set into motion one of professional football's more bizarre sequences. It is hot in July in Thousand Oaks, which is situated in a valley where the sun takes triumphant command, mercilessly defiant of any flickering summer breezes. Duane Thomas, sitting in his room, elected not to join his teammates in practice. For Cowboy coach Tom Landry-Thomas had previously labeled him a "plastic man"-there was no more patience. Reluctantly, he had arrived at a crucial, undoubtedly agonizing decision. "We have to trade him," Landry told Tex Schramm, the Dallas general manager. Schramm nodded. But for Schramm the calendar was bearing down. It was the final day of interconference trading.

About 70 miles to the south of Thousand Oaks lies the Irvine campus of the University of California, a pleasant oasis of tranquility close to the cooling Pacific shores, where the San Diego Chargers were in training. Sid Gillman knows the Chargers, the team he served as head coach and general manager from the shaky beginnings of the AFL in 1960 until he departed, with bitterness and recriminations, during the 1971 season. In his new post in charge of research and development, Gillman, a keen judge of talent, figured strongly in the discussions. At one point, the names of two promising young athletes arose -running back Mike Montgomery and wide receiver Billy Parks. Potential stars, Gillman judgedwould the Chargers be willing to give them up for Duane Thomas?

They are on the phone now. Charger owner Gene Klein and coach Harland Svare join in thoughtful reflection. They visualize Thomas in Charger blue and the notion is entrancing. Klein, with his knowledge of show business, is fully aware of the value of star quality—and Duane Thomas, for all of his difficulties, is unquestionably a super-star. Svare is struck

by what he later calls a "gut feeling." By any reckoning, it's a gamble but, as Svare says, "Sometimes you've got to roll the dice." The deal is made—and it is made unconditionally. That is to say, wherever Thomas' whims take him, should he play or not play, whatever his inclinations, the trade holds firm.

So the dice were thrown and the events that followed, tragic and perplexing, would merge into a strange montage of cloak and dagger, of mysterious arrivals and departures, headlines and judgments and shredded emotions. It began with Thomas paying a visit to the Chargers' camp and then he was gone. The pattern is one that would, inexplicably, be repeated for the next few months. Overnight, he became football's version of the mysterious Judge Crater, reported here, reported there and everywhere.

There was talk that a muscular athletic fellow had been seen walking at a street corner in East San Diego, near the playground where Maureen Connolly, years earlier, had learned to play championship tennis and where Ted Williams, many years earlier, had learned how to strike a moving baseball with uncommon skill and grace. Several kids had spotted him. One peered closely at the face he had seen only in newspaper photographs.

"You're Duane Thomas," the kid piped.

"Who are you?" Thomas parried.
"I'm—uh, oh, I'm Lance Alworth," said the kid.

"I'm Escondido," said Thomas, referring to a town about 35 miles north of San Diego. Several years ago, the Chargers used to train up there, in Escondido, and perhaps Duane Thomas had remembered. Or did he?

Near a San Diego hotel, where he was staying briefly, a man saw him and asked, politely: "Are you Duane Thomas?"

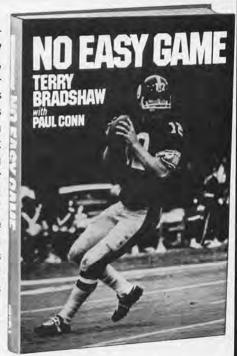
"I'm everybody," said Thomas and briskly walked on.

On a Tuesday in mid-September,

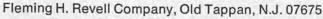
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Duane Thomas

Thomas arrived at practice in San Diego, wearing his black, high-top shoes. His weight seemed down but as he ran through pass patterns with John Hadl throwing, he looked trim and solid and confident—but, as always, noncommital.

When practice ended, he spoke briefly with the press. Tex Maule was out from the East doing a piece on the Chargers and confronted Thomas with: "Did you come to play?" Duane answered, simply: "Yes."

"Are you in shape?" the writer asked.

"I'm always in shape," said Duane.

"Why did you wait so long (52 days in all since the trade had been made) before reporting?"

"What do you think?" said Thomas, thereby terminating the interview.

To his vast surprise, Jerry Gross, sports director for KFMB-TV, the local CBS affiliate, found Thomas amenable to a TV interview. Why, Gross began, had he been late joining the team?

"That's a good question," Duane

"Well?" Gross said.

"In the first place, I haven't thought that much about that question. I don't have an answer."

Had he watched his team, the Chargers, lose to the 49ers, 34 to 3, in San Francisco? "I play football," said Thomas. "Normally, I don't watch the games. I play in them."

"Would it be difficult learning the Chargers' system after two years at Dallas?"

"I am a football player," Thomas said, without expression. "So any system would not be difficult for me to catch on to. It would be like meeting a new person."

Since August 28, Thomas had been assessed fines by the San Diego club amounting to \$3,150— a \$150 a day assessment levied by Coach Svare. What did he think of the fines? "I don't like to discuss the ramifications of that," Thomas said.

Now, Thomas added, his goal was "the ultimate...the Super Bowl. Now they (meaning San Diego) had the best club in the world."

"By your addition to the team?"
"That's another way of putting it," said Thomas.

"Do you have anything to say to the citizens of San Diego?"

Thomas paused momentarily. "Hello," he said.

The next morning, Thomas was in Coach Svare's office, wanting to discuss contract. But Svare told him that contracts are the province of Phil Bengston, then the club's director of talent, or owner Gene Klein. Thomas chose to consider this a rebuff and declared he would be going back to Dallas. "Then go," said Svare.

He remained instead in the San Diego area. Someone noticed him in Del Mar, a beach community about 20 miles up the freeway. Thomas had gone there to confer with George Powell, a management counsel who had befriended him at West Texas State. It was Powell who suggested that \$300,000 for three years would be a nice round number on a contract. According to Powell, Thomas agreed, saying: "Yeah, I would take \$300,000 for three years."

By late morning, Thomas was on the Chargers' practice field next to the Stardust Country Club in Mission Valley, working out alone. When he saw the other players approaching, he quickly left and hitchhiked a ride to the San Diego airport, not too far away. There he was met by George Powell, who had raced down from Del Mar in an attempt to persuade Thomas to remain in town. Thomas made several phone calls but he couldn't raise the money for air fare. In the meantime, two planes departed for Dallas. Thomas stayed. At 4:30 in the afternoon, Bobby Hood, an administrative aide with the Chargers, entered the terminal along with a man identified later as Bill Miller. He's a San Diego business executive who had known Thomas in Dallas and thought he might intercede.

With Hood and Miller, Thomas left by car. They went to Miller's home in San Diego and then, shortly thereafter, they returned to the airport, where Thomas boarded a plane for Palm Springs and the desert home of Gene Klein. There it was reported that Klein had made "a generous offer." As it turned out, a San Diego attorney named Jack Schrall had also offered to assist Thomas without fee and had helped negotiate the desert meeting.

Afterward, Schrall told the San Diego Union's Jerry Magee: "It is so substantial an offer it just cannot be ignored . . . The next step is up to Duane. I would tell him to consider it and then to go to someone beyond his knowledge and age. He is, I think, a man in a strange land, as it were. I hope and pray this guy goes to somebody. In his mind, he doesn't have the experience to evaluate the information given him . . . His problem is the problem of all young men 24 years of age who are baffled by what is going on around them ... He has got to go outside himself-he has got to or he is gone."

And on a San Diego radio station, sportscaster Rod Page was spear-heading a campaign he called "Dollars for Duane," seeking funds from listeners to help defray the salary sought by Thomas. But nobody knew what that salary was. Thomas was, as always, silent.

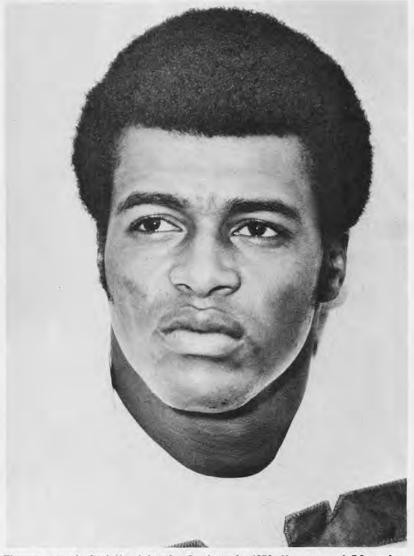
The season began to roll—without Duane Thomas. The Chargers went off on an eastern road swing, first to Baltimore and then to Detroit and then down to Fort Lauderdale, Fla., where they would stay before meeting the Miami Dolphins. Rumors were afloat now that Thomas would be dealt in trade for a high draft choice to the Houston Oilers, in desperate need of a running back.

By now it was the middle of October. As the Chargers were engaged in their drills one day, Thomas arrived in the Florida sunshine. He conferred several times with Harland Svare, then he spent the next two days in his room. On Saturday, he attended a team meeting, accompanied his teammates on the bus and participated in the practice. A sportswriter, Steve Bisheff of the San Diego Evening Tribune approached him in the dressing room.

"How do you feel, Duane?" he asked.

"I felt fine until you came around," Thomas snapped, putting a definite cork on the conversation.

Later in the afternoon, he informed Svare that he was going back to



Thomas was drafted No. 1 by the Cowboys in 1970. He averaged 5.3 yards a carry his rookie year.

Dallas. Svare nodded and in answer to queries from the press could only shake his head and say: "It's complicated. Very complicated."

Three weeks pass. Whatever talks that have been held between Thomas and the Chargers are kept secret. Then, one hour before the Chargers are to meet the Cowboys in San Diego Stadium, the rumors are confirmed-Duane Thomas, No. 33, has been activated. Will he play? Well, he just might. In the locker room on that sunny fall Sunday, Thomas sits in front of the cubicle once assigned to the injured Jerry LeVias and stares morosely at the walls, donning his jersey and his equipment in slow, deliberate moves. When he walks ever so slowly on the field, a crowd that would soon swell to 54,476 greets him with some cheers, a few vagrant boos.

After walking about halfway across the field, Thomas falls into a peculiarly mincing step. Then he stops. John Hadl, a football in his hand, notices Thomas and gently flips the ball to him. Thomas reacts instinctively and catches the ball. And then he lets it drop to the ground - and then he walks, in very slow steps, into the end zone. All about him the Chargers are running, loosening their muscles, preparing. But Duane Thomas had his hands fastened to his knees and he is staring at the ground. He is immobile, seemingly engaged in meditation. This lasts for nearly 20 minutes. Then he straightens up and runs a quick wind sprint. The crowd cheers. Thomas stares back, walking along the sidelines.

Just before the kickoff, as the band is playing the National Anthem, Thomas, who has finally removed his helmet, paces along the sidelines in front of the Charger bench, oblivious to his surroundings. Throughout the game-the Chargers lost, 34 to 28-Thomas sat immobile on the bench, his right arm resting on the back, his expression dourly impassive, looking only straight ahead. Someone in the press box cracked: "The scouting reports say he has great peripheral vision." But it seemed less a time for jokes than for . . . compassion.

During the game, several players attempted conversation. Bob Babich patted him on the knee. Lee Roy Caffey, once a teammate of Thomas' at Dallas, said to him: "Duane, get yourself together. We need you next week." But Thomas remained mute and sullen.

By the time the reporters were admitted into the locker room, following the defeat, Thomas was gone. "Nothing Thomas does is deliberate," judged Gene Klein. "His problems are not those of hostility or antagonism. It's obvious the young man has a few problems."

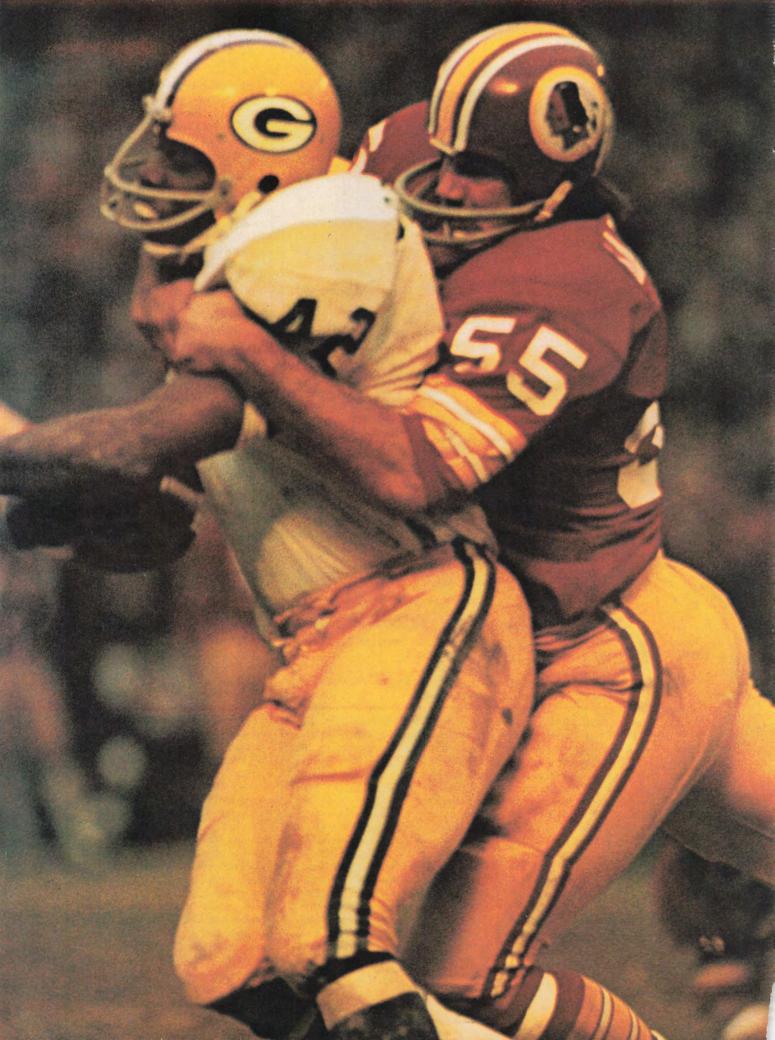
Two days later, Thomas reported for practice. But on the following day, he was missing. And on that day, for Duane Thomas, 25, the season was over. The Chargers placed him on the reserve list. "Duane is just not prepared to play football," said Coach Svare.

And then in early July of this year, San Diego dealt Thomas, who had shown up a day late at training camp and been fined and suspended, to George Allen for two first round draft picks, one in 1974 and one in 1975.

Harland Svare, head coach of the Washington Redskins has a parting comment about Thomas. "I have no remorse at all about giving up the NFL's greatest runner since Jim Brown," he said. "Maybe somebody can solve a problem I can't."

Many observers seem to feel that if George Allen with his talent for appeasing alleged "troublemakers" can get Duane back to his 1971 form, then Washington, with Thomas and Larry Brown doing the running, can be expected to proceed right back to the Super Bowl

and win it.



Chris Hanburger

espetual Votion

■ Some people are born to be stars. Some are not. Chris Hanburger was not born to be a star. It just happened.

Don't ask him when. Or why. Or how. He can't tell you. Or if he could, he probably wouldn't tell you any-

Hanburger doesn't even like to be

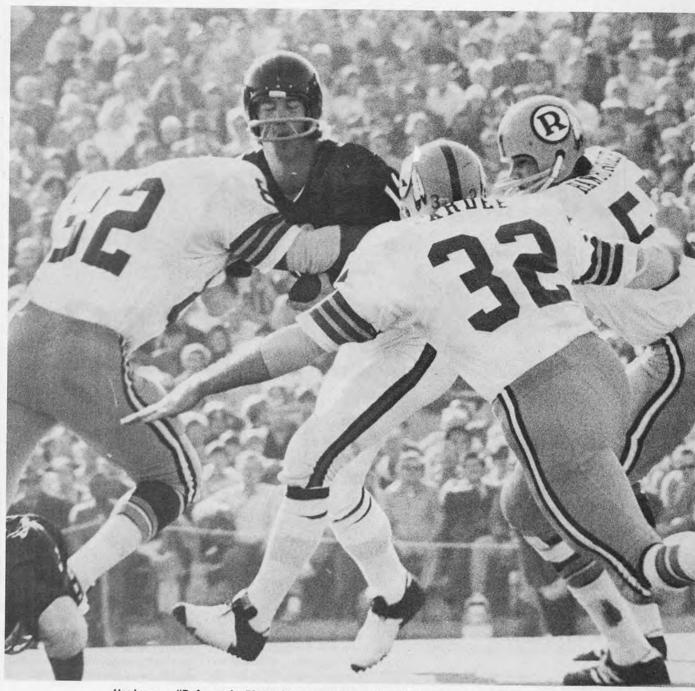
told he's a star.

"Honors are something I never think about," he said of his being recognized by most selectors as the Most Valuable Defensive player in the National Football Conference in 1972.

The rightside linebacker of the Washington Redskins who did so much last year to help his team win its first championship in 30 years would like people to believe he is oblivious to the frills and cheers accorded a successful performer in the National Football League.

To Chris Hanburger, professional football is satisfaction from within, earning the respect of your teammates and the brute force of the game itself.

By George Solomon



Hanburger: "Defense is 70 to 80 per cent reaction. You can sense when things take place . . . And sometimes that makes a great difference in whether or not you are able to so stop a play."

He is, in a sense, a throwback to the days when football players were mortal men.

"I've never looked to achieve personal recognition," Hanburger said one morning two weeks before he would head for the Redskins' training base in Carlisle, Pa., to begin his ninth season in the NFL.

Sportswriters who have covered the Redskins consider Hanburger one of the toughest interviews on the team.

On most occasions, Hanburger is the master of the monosyllabic answer, often exuding the warmth of a man whose car has run out of gas on Washington's beltway during rush hour. He earned his nickname: "Grumpy."

On this particular July morning he was unusually relaxed and expansive over an order of poached eggs and coffee. Although unsigned at the time, he showed no signs of being uptight

over contract negotiations. At the age of 32, Chris Hanburger, a 218-pound linebacker, knows very well what he can do, and how much he means to the Washington Redskins' defense.

"It's totally absurd to start a season and set a bunch of goals," he said. "What good does it do to say, 'I'm going to make so many tackles and so many interceptions?" If you're a professional, you'll try to make as many tackles and interceptions as you can.



"If you make a lot of tackles and win some honors, fine," he continued. "But it's more important for the team to succeed. If the team wins, everything falls into place."

Hanburger's philosophy coincides perfectly with the ideology of George Allen, the coaching Messiah who in two years brought the Redskins from mediocrity to the Super Bowl.

"We use the word 'togetherness' an awful lot and to some people it sounds

corny," Hanburger said. "But you've got to have it if you want a successful team.

"Everyone takes pride in what he does on the Redskins. Offensive players. Defensive players. Special teamers. To us, the special team players are more than that—they're first team ball players who truly believe they are doing their best on every play.

"I'm just as happy for a guy who makes a tackle inside the 20-yard line on a kickoff as I am for the guy who makes an interception on defense, or a long run on offense. I honestly believe that's one of the reasons we've had so much success the past two seasons."

Nonetheless, Hanburger is more than a small part in Allen's well-oiled, supposedly happy machine. He has, after nine years, achieved prominence as one of the best linebackers in football.

Although appearing to disdain the spotlight, he has in his own quiet way carved a niche for himself in Washington off the field, showing up regularly in television commercials and doing his own daily radio show during the season.

Each afternoon Hanburger telephones radio station WMAL with a Redskin Report—usually a bland rewrite of a press release or similar unexciting piece of news. If someone is looking for information to use against the Redskins, he's not going to get it from Chris Hanburger. On Sundays, he moves to show the Redskin locker room for a post-game gabfest which is livelier than his daily effort. He also is in great demand as a public speaker.

The rise of Hanburger to such lofty heights was unexpected, to everyone except Hanburger. Despite a fine career at North Carolina, he was virtually ignored by most pro scouts because in college he weighed around 200 pounds. The lack of bulk was the reason for his not being selected until the 18th round of the 1964 draft by the

But Hanburger maintains the league-wide slur did not discourage him. He was determined to play in the NFL.

"Until my senior year I really had no intention of playing professional football," he said. "But in my senior year I decided I could play. If I didn't make it with the Redskins, I made up my mind to try out with every other team in the league. I'd have to be cut by every team before I'd be conviced I couldn't play.

"Often a kid out of college will be drafted by a team loaded with veterans. He sees his competition and loses his drive needlessly. It's a shame. There are 26 teams in the NFL. You should exhaust every possibility before giving up."

It didn't take the Redskins long to discover they had tapped a defensive fireball. "We knew Chris was aggressive and had talent," said Tim Temerario, the team's personnel director and at the time an assistant coach. "It was just a question of whether or not he was big enough."

In Chris' rookie season, 1965, he proved he was big enough. By the 10th game he had become the starting right linebacker for the Redskins, a position he has held ever since. And at 218 pounds, he is still considered small for a pro linebacker.

He makes up for his lack of size with good speed, quickness, excellent reactions, intelligence and a dogmatic determination to succeed.

His style is exciting and devastatingly effective. He seemingly moves with reckless abandon, darting blithely past blockers to smack down the strongest of runners. But after nine years, he has learned his lessons well. Rarely is he beaten or fooled. What many people believe is a physical explosion on each play is actually a calculated maneuver. He tackles high, seldom missing his man. On blitzes, he often runs down the quarterback before a passing arm is raised. He is a man in command of his trade.

"Defense is seventy to eighty percent reaction," he said. "You can sense when things take place. But you cannot assume. You see something, a tip, and put it to use as an expectation. There's no guarantee this expectation will occur. But it gives you an edge —and sometimes that makes a great difference in whether or not you are able to stop a play.

"To me, defense is perpetual motion," Hanburger continued. "You've got one primary objective: get to the football."

The son of a retired Army colonel, Hanburger, when he was a teenager, also wanted a military career, After high school, he spent one year in the Army and one year at a military prep school hoping to be accepted by the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He was rejected and enrolled at North Carolina.

He lives in a large home in Upper Marlboro, Md., with his wife, Evelyn, and their two children, Jessie, 6½, and Jacqueline, 4. He drives 100 miles, roundtrip, each day to the Redskins' practice complex in Virginia.

In the off-season Hanburger works for a large Virginia auto dealership, learning every phase of the automobile business. When he isn't working he enjoys hunting.

At North Carolina he acquired the reputation of a savage hitter and received his share of plaudits in college.

From the outset of his pro career he displayed an affinity for making the big play. Twice since joining the Redskins he has scooped up fumbles and ran for touchdowns. He also ha made countless key tackles and interceptions.

In a game last year against the New York Giants he slyly tore the ball from Ron Johnson's grasp, giving the Redskins possession in the on the Giants' 38-yard-line. While the Giants and their fans were fuming, believing the play was dead before the swipe, Larry



Hanburger: "If you make a lot of tackles and win some honors, fine. But it's more important for the team to succeed. If the team wins, everything falls into place."

Brown ran for a touchdown to break a 9-9 tie. The Redskins eventually won, 23-17.

Afterwards, Diron Talbert, the fine defensive tackle of the Redskins, chuckled, "Ole Chris just snaked that ball. I bet over in the Giant lockerroom they're still bitching about that."

Talbert was correct. The Giants thought they were robbed.

Surrounded by writers, Hanburger admitted, "I was surprised as anyone when the call went our way."

The following Sunday in Shea

Stadium, Hanburger was stirring up the New York fans again. This time he plucked a Joe Namath pass out of the air a few minutes before the end of the first half and ran 41 yards to a touchdown breaking open what had been a tight game. The Redskins left town with a 35-17 truimph.

In a typically Hanburgean response, he played down the importance of his two vital plays on back-to-back weeks. "Every play is a big play," he declared. You cannot pinpoint one play in any game and say it

made the difference."

A friend wondered if he would get excited scoring three touchdowns in a game?

"I have emotions like anyone else," he replied. "But I don't display them. I'm more concerned about winning the game. An entertainer lives for applause. My only reward is winning. The years prior to 1971 were frustrating because we did not win. The last two years have been much more rewarding because we have won."

Hanburger intercepted four passes in 1972, returning them for 98 yards. Time and time again he came through with the big tackle. "He had a great season," Allen declared. "When we came to Washington we had a great deal of respect for Chris. He's improved every year and given us fine leadership."

Hanburger, one of Allen's defensive co-captains, accepts the praise of his coach graciously. However, inside he must feel a warm sense of satisfaction. Back in 1971, a few weeks after Allen took the job as head coach and general manager of the Redskins, he announced a massive trade which sent six former Los Angeles Rams to Washington to rejoin their former coach. The trade jolted many people, including the supposedly unjoltable Hanburger. Of the six former Rams involved in the deal, three-Jack Pardee, Myron Pottios and Maxie Baughan-were linebackers.

Allen telephoned Hanburger to tell him of the trade before it was announced publicly. Nevertheless, Chris was surprised and upset. Hadn't he made the Pro Bowl in 1966, 1967, 1968 and 1969? Why would the new coach trade for three linebackers?

"I was scared when I first heard about the trade," Hanburger said. "Then I started thinking about what I'd done and what I could do. I came to the conclusion anyone who would try and take my job from me would be in for one hell of a battle."

The battle never developed. Baughan, who played right linebacker for the Rams, did not perform in 1971 because of a foot injury and subsequently retired.

Hanburger, meanwhile, blended easily with the new players Allen brought with him to Washington in 1971. He and Pardee took hold and became one of the best outside linebacking teams in the league.

The right side of the defense—end Verlon Biggs, Hanburger and cornerback Mike Bass—provided a highly formidable force as the Redskins





Hanburger: "Win or lose, you've got to keep looking ahead. Sometimes when you win a game, you still fall on your face."

Chris Hanburger

earned their first playoff spot in 26 years.

In 1972, Washington's defense was opportunistic, cunning and viable. In a sudden and unexpected turn of events, the Redskins toppled the defending world champion Dallas Cowboys to win the NFC's Eastern Division, swept past the Green Bay Packers in the playoffs and demolished the Cowboys, 26-3, in the NFC title

For many Washingtonians it was a season never to be duplicated . . . nor obliterated by the 14-7 loss to Miami in Super Bowl VII. For Hanburger, it would be his year of recognition.

He was no longer Mr. Who? "I honestly do not believe I played any differently last year than in my previous seven seasons," he said. "It's all a matter of the kind of people you're playing with.

"There are a great many fine players on our team. We've also got a tremendous amount of confidence in Allen's defensive system. There are just so many defenses involved in the whole system we never have to allow the offense to dictate what we do."

From the anxieties of Allen's early days in Washington to last year's drive to the Super Bowl, the relationship between Hanburger and the Redskin coach has grown steadily. With Pardee retired to the Redskin coaching staff, Hanburger now assumes more responsibilities this season, including

Allen has no doubt Hanburger can handle the job, nor is there a question that the Redskins linebacking corps will remain strong with the acquisition of Dave Robinson from Green Bay to replace Pardee and the maturing of middle linebacker Harold McLinton. "Chris should have no trouble cal-

ling the signals," Pardee said. "He's an intelligent football player who works very hard.

the calling of defensive signals. Pardee had been the "defensive quarter-

back" for the Redskins.

"What makes him so good are his quick reactions and instincts. I always felt he was one of the best in the business.'

In the days preceding the start of training camp this year Hanburger was anxious to return to action. To some, the listless defeat at the hands of the Dolphins lingers. Not Hanburger.

"You can't die just because you lost one football game," he said forcefully. quite aware of Allen's "losing is like death" philosophy.

"There's no sense looking back," he continued. "Win or lose, you've got to keep looking ahead. Sometimes when you win a game, you still fall on your face. I think each player knows how well he's played. When you think you've played a perfect game, that's when to look out.

'This will be a crucial season for the Redskins. We can either be fat, or continue on what we started two years ago. We've got the kind of players who are willing to have a close-knit team and work out any problems. The majority want to be the best football team in the league and are willing to give the self discipline required to achieve that goal.

'George Allen is an excellent psychologist," Hanburger added. 'He has a way of being aware of each player on the team and what makes him tick. He's given us all a thorough understanding of our responsibilities. And he's formed a team of excellent players."

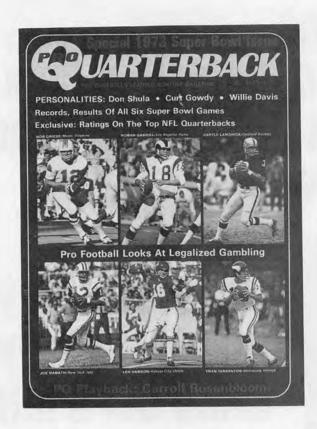
Hanburger lit a cigarette and reflected for a moment on the wild-eyed excitement generated the day last December 31 when the Redskins whipped the Cowboys, 26-3, for the NFC championship before more than 53,000 euphoric fans at RFK Stadium.

There is nothing phony about the Washington-Dallas rivalry," he said. "The crowds always seem to be so up for the games. The players, too.

"But," Hanburger added with a sly smile, "I've never needed someone with a cattle prod to get me going."



Hanburger has been a starter since his first season with Washington in 1965.



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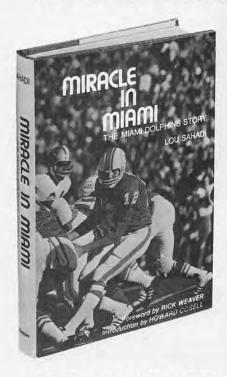
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September 1973

- Buffalo's O.J. Simpson was featured on the front cover of our November issue.
- The December cover went to the Minnesota Viking's new quarterback, Norm Snead.
- The Cowboys' Calvin Hill captured our January, 1972, cover.
- And in March, 1972, the Buffalo Bills' No. 1 draft choice, Walt Patulski, appeared on our cover.
- Kansas City's Len Dawson graced our June/July cover.
- Our September issue featured Charlie Sanders of the Detroit Lions.
- Fran Tarkenton, back with the Minnesota Vikings, anchored our October cover.
- Joe Namath, pro football's super quarterback, was featured in the November issue.
- Our December issue highlighted Larry Csonka of the Miami Dolphins.
- Larry Brown of the Washington Redskins was featured on our February cover.
- And Pittsburgh's Rookie of the Year, Franco Harris, headlined our March cover.
- Don Shula, head coach of the Miami Dolphins, appeared on our April/May cover.
- Our June/July issue highlighted MacArthur Lane of the Green Bay Packers on the cover.
- Terry Bradshaw of the Pittsburgh Steelers spotlighted our September cover.

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Johnny Rodgers

Day of 1971. There was his runback of a kick that destroyed Alabama in the Orange Bowl of '72. And, of course, those devastating four touchdowns that demoralized Notre Dame this past New Year's.

Steve Bisheff of the San Diego Evening Tribune remembers covering the UCLA-Nebraska game last fall when Rodgers made two cuts where there obviously wasn't any room to cut and then he scurried untouched into the end zone.

"Did you see what I saw?" an incredulous Bisheff asked a fellow scribe.

"I think so," the other replied, "but I'm not sure."

It is like that when you watch Johnny Rodgers. There are feints within feints and the eyes call for confirmation.

Off the field, however, Johnny Rodgers made other moves and those, too, were unfortunately part of the record. But they produced ink in the papers -involvement in a holdup, a felony conviction and probation; an arrest for possession of marijuana, cleared for lack of evidence, and a traffic violation. Two comparatively minor scrapes and one not so minor. These troubles surfaced again when the nation's top football players were being weighed by 1,100 sports writers and TV-radio people to determine the "outstanding college player" and winner of the 1972 Heisman Trophy.

There were those who insisted that Rodgers' other record, the one on the police blotter, should preclude him from consideration as an unworthy example for youngsters to emulate. His fellow athletes were more sympathetic. "When I read in columns that Johnny shouldn't get the Heisman and that I was the type who really deserved it, I felt bad," said O.J. Simpson, the 1968 winner. "I just narrowly missed getting into some scrapes myself . . . and so did everybody else from the ghettos." And Oklahoma's Greg Pruitt, who would finish second

to Rodgers in the balloting, said beforehand: "If people voted against Johnny because of his troubles, I wouldn't have wanted to win it that way."

"People don't understand," Rodgers says. "When you grow up where I did, you have a million chances to give up hope or mess up your life. I go home now, to North Omaha, and a lot of guys, all of them good athletes at one time, stop me and say, 'I should have made it but...' They made their mistakes and never did make it off the streets. I was lucky. I only made one big mistake. And I was able to overcome it. I'm very proud of that."

Although 377 of those who voted saw fit to rate him no higher than third, Rodgers led the balloting in every section of the country. Winning the Heisman was, for Rodgers, a singularly gratifying reward in the wake of several trying years in which he developed from his period of confusion into maturity. The product of an Omaha ghetto, Rodgers was raised by his mother and grew up in the midst of turbulence and troubles. It was on the last day of his freshman year at Nebraska that Rodgers joined some friends in a holdup which netted \$90 and subsequent probation—"it was really just a prank," says Rodgers-and, in the wake of this, the continuing harrassment, Rodgers insists, by the police of Lincoln.

"They haven't done anything to offend me," Johnny says, "but they're there all the time, dropping in on my apartment at all hours—at 1 or 2 or 3 in the morning. They give me this jive about people complaining about the noise, that the music is too loud. Sometimes they say my dog is barking, too. How can that be when I'm asleen?"

Conscious of both his image and of his ability to set an example, Rodgers frequently drove the 100 miles to Omaha from Lincoln to visit his old high school and his old neighborhood, imploring the kids to get an education and to stay out of trouble. "If the kids on the street see that I did it, I think I can be a good example to them instead of a bad one."

He notes, ruefully: "I don't think you should judge me at 21 for what I did at 17."

Johnny Rodgers, late in May, suddenly whirled, cut and made his longest run—clear out of the country. Offered a three-year, no-cut contract said to be in excess of \$100,000 a year, he signed with the Montreal Alouettes of the Canadian Football



Rodgers: "If I was as big as other people, I probably couldn't do a lot of things I do out there. The big thing is quickness."



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Johnny Rodgers

League. He would be that league's highest paid player.

Into the Canadian sunset Johnny Rodgers ran, leaving the Chargers and the NFL out in the cold.

"I wanted to play for the Chargers," says Rodgers. "If they would have offered me even \$50,000 less than Montreal, I would have signed with San Diego. But they never even got that close. I don't think the Chargers thought I was serious about going to Canada. I think they thought I was bluffing."

He was not.

The Alouettes, as early as April 1972, began pursuing the versatile Rodgers. They weren't to catch him for 13 months. Once Rodgers senior year eligibility was reestablished after he was declared temporarily ineligible after an off-campus indiscretion, the Alouettes slowed down their pursuit.

But following Rodgers' amazing Orange Bowl performance against Notre Dame, the Alouettes stepped up their low key approach to sign Rodgers, realizing he would not want to commit himself prior to the NFL draft. The approach was to make him aware of the Alouettes and of the CFL.

Once the "opposition" in the NFL was established—San Diego—the Alouettes flew Johnny and his agent's attorney to Montreal prior to his visiting San Diego. Rodgers received the red carpet treatment. He met with

Alouette head coach Marv Levy, general manager J.I. Albrecht and president-owner Samuel Berger.

Johnny was provided with a microscopic view of Montreal in a whirlwind 48-hour visit. Finances were discussed and a ten day decision time limit was agreed upon. Money was important, but so were other things. "Money's not the most important thing," he was quoted by Fred Roberts in the Montreal Star. "I'm looking for security over a long period of time." He also looked over Montreal to see "how black athletes are accepted here, what type of a man Marv Levy is and how I'll like the city."

He apparently found all the right answers. By May 25, Rodgers had turned his back upon the San Diego contract offers, and signed a three year pact rumored to be in excess of six figures with triple pay if he is cut or traded.

Rodgers' agents said the disparity between the San Diego and Montreal offers was so great that there was no contest. San Diego claimed their offer would have made Rodgers the year's highest-paid first-round draft choice.

Rodgers is the second Heisman Trophy winner to come to Canada directly out of college. Billy Vessels in 1953 was brought up north by the Edmonton Eskimos. Terry Baker played briefly for Edmonton after winning the Heisman Trophy at Oregon State but playing his first two years with the Los Angeles Rams.

Owner Berger was elated with Rodgers' signing. He was quoted in the Star as saying: "It's particularly gratifying to me that Johnny decided in our favor. We've been accused of being cheap, of pinching pennies. My policy has always been not to squander money through mismanagement. There was never a question of saving money where a good ball player was concerned."

Head coach Levy described Rodgers in the *Star* as "a guy who runs into a group of people and comes flying out the other side with the ball. I watched him and I kept saying to myself: 'How did he ever break all those tackles?' "

The Alouettes feel they have nabbed an instant superstar. The Alouettes are in desperate need of a superstar. Many people feel the Alouettes outplayed San Diego in order to save their franchise which has lost \$1 million in three years. The Alouettes are hoping a superstar like Rodgers can bring in an additional 10,000 people per game.



Rodgers: "It's always a brain war between the receiver and the backs on defense. I think it's safe to say I won those little wars out there."

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Twilley

"It worried me for awhile, having to fight for my job every August," Twilley was saying as the Dolphins returned to training quarters at Miami's Biscayne College after the College All-Star Game in Chicago. "Now, it doesn't bother me a bit. Football is a competitive game. Being forced to compete for the job makes me a better player."

Coach Shula puts it more succinctly. "Twilley thrives on challenge. He needs it to bring out the best in him." And the Dolphins' managing partner, Joe Robbie, notes "most players in Twilley's spot would demand to be traded."

Currently, Ron Sellers, a former Florida State flash acquired by Shula from the Dallas Cowboys, is supplying the challenge. And his addition has given the Dolphins one of the NFL's finest wide receiving corps.

In 1969, the year before Shula's arrival in Miami, Twilley fractured an elbow and missed the final 10 games. So, he was just a body in camp as Shula began preparations for his initial campaign as head coach of the Dolphins.

Willie Richardson, a former all-pro receiver, had the inside track for the job that year, but Twilley won it back. In 1971, Shula groomed Otto Stowe, his top draft choice, but again Twilley became the starter at the other end opposite Paul Warfield.

"Before the '72 season," Twilley said, "I told Coach Shula I was going to name a child after him but when he brought in Marlin Briscoe (the AFC's top receiver in 1970) and moved him ahead of me I informed him I'd changed my mind." He chuckles as he tells the story, showing a



Twilley: "I've been playing for so long under Bob Griese that he can anticipate every move I make. We have such a sense of timing between us."

spark of humor rare in the hardnosed game of pro football.

When Briscoe pulled a hamstring warming up for the fourth game, Twilley had his starting job back. But he would have had it anyway, injury or no injury, because the previous Sunday while spelling Briscoe, he had caught two clutch passes in the last three minutes against the Minnesota Vikings to set up the winning touchdown.

Shula called them the clutch plays of the season. "If Howard hadn't made those catches." the Coach said, "I'm convinced we would have blown the perfect season right there."

Al DeRogatis, one of the game's more erudite broadcasters, climbs on cloud 9 whenever Twilley trots onto the field. "I know something is going to happen. He's the best clutch receiver in football. He always finds the open spots in a zone defense. He's uncanny."

Twilley isn't very big (5-10 and 180) and he isn't very fast (some interior linemen can beat him at 40 yds.). He doesn't make those sensational Otis Taylor-type catches and the sum total of his talents seems to provide a protective coloration which enables him to blend into the crowd.

Twilley? More often than not a fan won't recognize him as a pro football player. Sometimes he's confused with ex-NBA star Jack Twyman. He may well be the most completely competent wide receiver in the league and yet, except for Miami's own Dol-fans, Twilley remains an unknown even though he was a vital factor in pro football's first all-conquering season.

sophomore start was hampered by a pre-season ankle injury which took a bone-chip removal job to repair.

"But they couldn't let me go," Twilley said. "I had a three-year no-cut contract. If it wasn't for that I'd have been chopped, but fast."

Once the ankle strengthened, he started strutting his stuff, finishing the '67 campaign with 24 catches for 314 yds. and, a year later, upping the count to 39 for 604 yds.

"But I wasn't too happy about it," he said, "because the team was going nowhere and when the fractured elbow sidelined me for 10 games in '69 I thought it was curtains for my pro career for sure.

"I began to think somebody was trying to tell me something. I had just bought a new home in Florida and was working for my master's degree in business administration at the University of Miami. (He'd earned a degree in electrical engineering at Tulsa.) So, I was shook about the injury, about my career and about my finances if I lost my job with the Dolphins."

That's when Howard Twilley looked up his minister for some advice.

His minister is John Huffman, formerly of Tulsa, now of the First Presbyterian Church in Key Biscayne, Fla., where President Nixon attends when he's in residence. A former football player from Wheaton College, Rev. Huffman came up with the right advice although all Twilley will say about it in retrospect is "God's game plan worked out for me."

Rebounding from the disastrous '69 season had to be the turning point for the man who thrives on adversity.

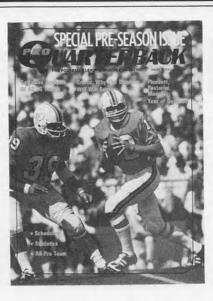
The initial turning point had come when he was a youngster in Houston's Woodland Acres Junior High School and his Dad was standing over him, shaking a finger and saying, "this is the last time you play football."

Later on, at the hospital, after the doctor had explained that the deep cleat gash in young Twilley's leg could have

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Twilley

given him a permanent limp if an inch in the other direction, his father repeated the admonition about no more football and Howard, Jr. began to cry.

"Your leg hurt?" the doctor asked. "No, the leg's okay," the boy replied. "but I just gotta play football."

Pop Twilley, a burly 210-lb construction worker who had played only "barefoot" football as a boy in Alabama, was startled by his son's outburst. And then, suddenly, he understood.

"Okay," he said, with a shrug of his shoulders, "I take it back. You're in the hands of The Lord."

Later on, because he wanted his boy to go to college, he loaded up his car with Howard and four of his teammates on the Galena Park High School team and drove them up to Tulsa for interviews with Coach Glenn Dobbs. Young Twilley got his athletic scholarship and made the most of it, both athletically and acade nically.

It is an American saga of college and football, an accent, for a change, on the good to be derived from the athletic scholarship system.

It is typical of Twilley that he spent a portion of his rookie bonus to set up a scholarship at his alma mater because "I wanted to give something back to my school for the things it gave me."

It fits the Twilley character, too, that he never has been heard to put the knock on an opponent. Last fall he beat the Jets' Steve Tannen four times, once for a touchdown, but refused to fault the rival cornerback despite the badgering of some media members looking for a "blast" angle.

"The touchdown pass wasn't six inches over Steve's head," Twilley told them. "He made a good defensive play and just missed the interception. He's got real ability. They put him one-on-one with a wide receiver; that's real you-do-or-you-don't pressure."

Twilley tells it like it is.

He runs pass patterns as precise as the electrical diagrams he drew for his college thesis. As the nonpareil Don Hutson says, "pass patterns never change. There always will be square-outs, square-ins, hooks, curls, posts, flags, slants and fly patterns.

"I mean, what more can anybody do? So, what changes is the men who run the patterns. They run 'em better and learn to get loose in the seams of the defense. That's why pure speed has come to matter less and less in the art of pass-catching."

This from a man who rates as one of the great passcatchers of all time.

But the ability to catch the football is only half of Twilley's immense talent, maybe less than half, and one interview session at Long Beach, Calif., shortly before Super Bowl VII, he was talking about it.

"I feel it is just as important to make the crackback block as it is to catch a pass, and that's the kind of spirit our guys have that makes this a great football team . . . and that's why we are going to win the Super Bowl."

Howard Schnellenberger, the Shula lieutenant who moved up to head coach of the Baltimore Colts this season, adds the following dimension to Twilley as the complete performer:

"He's a very physical guy despite his size. He'll come out after you. Defensive backs have got to be particularly careful. He might give 'em a fake pass pattern or he might knock their clock off. He puts everything into this game."

And "putting everything into this game" is another definition of teamwork because in everything Twilley ever has done in football from the days of his youth at Woodland Acres Junior High School he first thought has been for the team.

The imcomparable Warfield, probably the best known Dolphin outside of Griese, has everything a wide receiver is supposed to have, including blazing speed. But it takes a Shula to use both to their best advantage and to put them into the correct perspective.

"The two complement each other," Shula says. "What pleases me most, perhaps, is that each is an exceptional blocker and that's something a lot of fans don't realize. Howard doesn't have Paul's speed, but he has quickness and strength."



Twilley: "I've always felt that receivers take, or are given, too much credit. The quarterbacks deserve more than they get."

When Shula talks about blocking ability in a wide receiver he is talking about team spirit.

Out of that same pre-Super Bowl VII Twilley interview comes another quote which gives further insight into his feelings re team spirit.

"I've always felt that receivers take, or are given, too much credit. The quarterbacks deserve more than they get. I've been playing for so long under Bob Griese he can anticipate every move I make. We have such a sense of timing between us and Earl Morrall has picked up that same thing very fast."

Then he added, "I wish they'd double-cover me on Sunday and single-cover Paul because he's the greatest—the finest deep receiver in football—and there's no way they can single-cover him and stop him from scoring touchdowns."

But the Redskins double-covered Warfield and single-covered Twilley, and that didn't work, either. No team can double-cover both without leaving itself open to sudden disaster elsewhere, so it would appear that those defenses which must face the Dolphins this season are in for some very long, unhappy afternoons.

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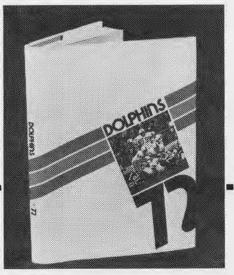
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Dick Butkus

"His style is the total movement thing," says another appraiser. "He moves all the time. It's only logical that he move quickly and in that way he pits his quickness against the size of the offensive linemen."

One of those linemen is Dave Manders, the Dallas center who experienced Buoniconti two Super Bowls ago. "In a way," Mander said, "it's easier to cope with Butkus than Buoniconti. Butkus knows you're coming at him and will wait for you. His idea is to overpower you any way and then get on with his business. Buoniconti is so quick he just eliminates you and starts right toward the action. He doesn't worry about what's going on around him. He reacts that fast."

One veteran associated with the NFL said he always has wondered why teams don't drive at Miami right up the middle and neutralize Buoniconti by that maneuver.

"He roams around and makes interceptions now because he has the freedom to do it," the man says. "But if they went up the middle early in the game, they would have him hanging in there to play the run and they would fake the ball, he would be standing there trying to fight a guard."



"Of all the middle linebackers," said a football enthusiast, "Lucci is the best balanced. He's going to play the run well enough to beat you and he's going to play the pass well enough to beat you."

Teams have tried that strategy against the Dolphins, but it works less than it succeeds. Buoniconti simply is too smart to be caught up in that too often.

"He might not be as big as the other fellows who play the position," one observer notes, "but he's as valuable to the Miami defense in the way it operates as the others are to their defenses. He gets the job done."

Mike Lucci gets the job done, too, even though he's the oldest of the half dozen. At 33, he's reached the point where wisdom starts taking over from force.

"He plays a knowledgeable game," one coach says. "He plays a more knowledgeable game than most of them. As you get older, you play more of a thinking game because it becomes a little difficult to overpower people who are 23, 24, 25 years old when you're in the middle-30 range. You have to use your total experience to do the job."

"Of all the middle linebackers," another football man says, "he is the best balanced. He's the kind of guy who isn't going to hurt you on any phase of the game. He's going to play the run well enough to beat you and he's going to play the pass well enough to beat you. His greatest forte is he plays everything exceptionally well."

Lucci, of course, plays in the same division as Butkus and for that reason frequently is overshadowed by the exploits of the burly Bear. A sometimes lively feud has erupted between the two and their supporters over their comparative merits, but Lucci always comes out second best.

"Lucci is a good strong player," one observer of the feud said, "but he doesn't belong in the same category as Butkus or, for that matter, Lanier and Curtis."

Tommy Nobis has suffered, in comparison, too, but in comparison with the potential he passesed when he entered the league in 1966.

"Nobis hasn't lived up to all the promise and potential he came into the league with," a coach says. "On any given day he can play with anybody, but injuries have hampered the potential greatness of his performance."

Nobis, a 6-foot-2, 235-pounder, has had two serious knee injuries, which have taken their toll on his mobility. Yet he had an outstanding season in 1972 and showed he isn't ready for wherever it is used-up middle linebackers

Says Larry Csonka, who has faced Nobis on some of his good days: "Nobis doesn't get wild-eyed like Butkus. He keeps a coldness about him and if you don't watch out, he'll put you out of the game."

"He plays more of a Butkus style," says one expert, "but with movement. Still, his movement isn't what it was before the injuries."

Ken Willard, San Francisco's running back, chose an unusual way to advertise his opinion of Nobis' ability. *Playboy* magazine once published an article on Butkus, whom they said was the toughest linebacker in the game. Willard read the article and took exception to Playboy's conclusion. "When you get around to doing a story on the best linebacker in professional football," he wrote in a letter to the magazine, "may I suggest Tommy Nobis of the Atlanta Falcons?"

But there it is. Everybody has his opinion on which middle linebacker is the best middle linebacker. A close observation in person and on television could bring a fan to his own conclusion. While he's observing, though, he'll be watching a group of players who are unparalleled at that position in any time in pro football.

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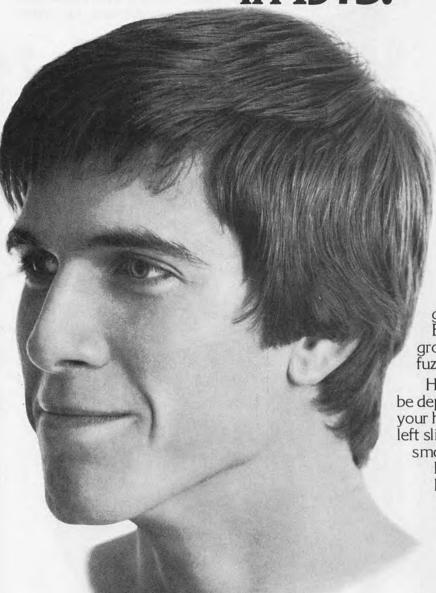
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And how to have long hair is 1973

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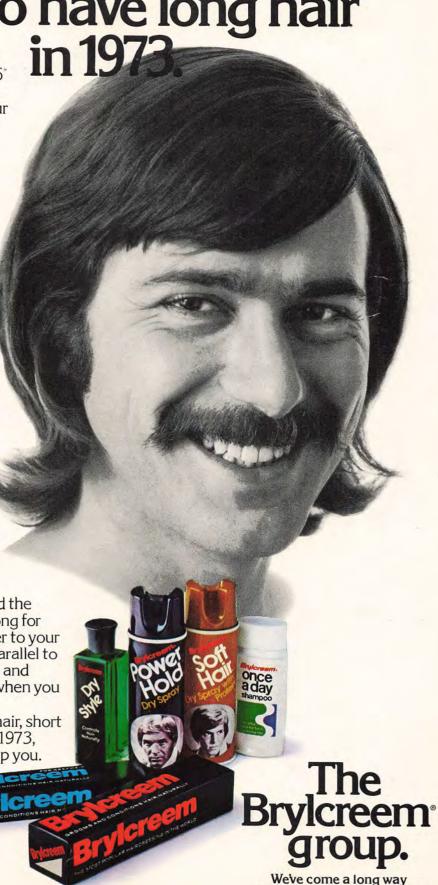
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